

variant

548 *The Division of Profit into Interest and Profit of Enterprise*

which he is to pay for it is the measure of the interest'. Quite the opposite. The prevailing rate of interest, the regulation of which it is the task of our genius Norman to explain, is the measure of the difference between the cash price and the price on credit. First of all, the cotton is for sale at its cash price. This is determined by the market price, which is itself governed by the state of demand and supply. Say that the price is £1,000. This concludes the transaction between the manufacturer and the cotton broker, as far as buying and selling is concerned. But now there is a second transaction as well. This is one between lender and borrower. The value of £1,000 is advanced to the manufacturer in cotton, and he has to pay it back in money, say in three months' time. The interest on £1,000 for three months, as determined by the market rate of interest, then forms the extra charge over and above the cash price. The price of cotton is determined by supply and demand. But the price for the advance of the cotton's value for three months, for the £1,000, is determined by the rate of interest. And this circumstance, i.e. that the cotton itself is transformed in this way into money capital, proves to Mr Norman that interest would exist even if money did not. If there was no money at all, there would certainly not be a general rate of interest.

The first thing to note is a vulgar conception of capital as 'commodities used in production'. In so far as these commodities figure as capital, they express their value as *capital*, as distinct from their value as *commodities*, in the profit that is made from their productive or commercial use. And the rate of profit necessarily has always something to do with the market price of the commodities bought and the demand and supply for them, even if it is determined by quite different factors. There is no doubt at all that the rate of profit forms a general limit to the rate of interest. But what Mr Norman is supposed to tell us is just how this limit is determined. And it is, determined by the demand and supply for money capital *as distinct* from other forms of capital. It could now be asked further: how is the demand and supply for money capital determined? There is beyond doubt a tacit connection between the supply of material capital and the supply of money capital, and it is equally clear that the industrial capital demanded for money is determined by the circumstances of actual production. Instead of enlightening us on this subject, Norman tells us the wisdom that the demand for money capital is not identical with the demand for money as such; and this only because Overstocked the, and the other



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Letters

Dear Editors,
For someone who claims to know the story, Daniel Jewesbury's account of Arthouse in Variant Winter 2002 is fairly out of touch.

Jewesbury talks about the closing of Arthouse by dwelling on its opening. The majority of his article produces opinions formed circa 1995, which at that time may have been relevant and informed, but reproduced today, are misleading. In 1995 there were real concerns. Few knew what the Internet was, and what role computers would have in art practice. He wilfully omits that over the next eight years artists began to figure that out, some quite effectively. Arthouse closed, that much is true. Jewesbury wants us to think a main problem was a lack of dedicated exhibition space. 'Where was its centre?', he implores. According to him, 'the cafe became the only effective and frequented space in the building,' and Arthouse was 'ill-used' and 'ill-defined'. In fact, artists used Arthouse. They were the backbone of its activity, the majority of its public, and were members of its staff and Board. Arthouse always had dedicated exhibition space, three at the time it closed. Its programmes originated from many points of interaction, including exhibitions, residencies, production, and arts information, as well as from unofficial, informal and unmediated exchanges.

It's important to recognise that Jewesbury's position is fundamentally conservative. Echoing people who dismiss artists' practice while only having the vaguest understanding of what it involves, Jewesbury dismisses the activity at Arthouse and invents a place that was 'ill-used', with no effect. Whether he liked what was taking place there or not, one fact remains. An organisation in Dublin centred on artists at every stage of their artistic production, closed. As public space, Arthouse was artist driven. In missing this crucial point, Jewesbury plays right into the hands of those who need justification to continue curbing, censoring, and closing down our public space.

Sincerely, Sarah Pierce
Artist and former Artistic Director of Arthouse

Variant Responds
Sarah Pierce's letter is unfortunate in that it dramatically misconstrues the editorial piece published in our last issue. That piece counterposed two stories, the closure of Arthouse and the spectacular failure of Belfast's bid to be European Capital of Culture 2008, in order to establish a basic argument, that artists continue to suffer from maladroitness of administration of 'the arts'. The very infrastructure which is meant to support artistic production, and to enable wide audience participation in that activity, is very often poorly devised and poorly administered; our piece made the point that this is usually because artists, the people who might be expected to know most about these issues, are so seldom consulted on or included in decisions which directly affect them and the conditions of their work.

We stand by this argument. We do not accept Pierce's assertion that latterly, artists had somehow appropriated Arthouse, wresting its control away from the Cultural Industrialists who 'managed' the institution. Our article did not attempt to describe in intricate detail the death throes of Arthouse: we did not consider it particularly relevant to analyse whether the Irish government, the Arts Council of Ireland, Temple Bar Properties or indeed all three were to blame for its demise. It's enough to be aware that someone clearly blundered, and that it's unlikely to have been the city's artists.

Projects initiated or run by artists usually consist of something other than the building in which they are housed (indeed they often have only an arbitrary connection with it). As a result they do not suddenly cease to exist when someone else takes the money away. This is the most important product of artists provisioning themselves with an

infrastructure: autonomy. If Arthouse had genuinely transmogrified into an artist-run organisation, to where did its activities relocate after the evacuation of Curved Street?

It is ironic, to say the least, that Pierce should choose to carry the torch for the administration which put her out of a job. At the end of the summer of 2000, after the brief bedhop that was Tim Brennan's sojourn as artistic director, Arthouse was generally agreed to be at its lowest point. This was several years after its inception. Pierce's contention that Arthouse very quickly shed the ontological crises which beset its early days is therefore simply not true. We are quite happy to state, however, that with Pierce's appointment came a new clarity of purpose and a sustained level of activity. These were things that hitherto had simply not existed. We find it unfortunate, and unbecoming, that the person left to defend the institution is not one of those who made the decision to curtail this renewed activity, but she whose own ideas were aborted as a result.

A couple of Pierce's points demand specific responses. Refuting an argument made in our editorial, she insists that Arthouse had three 'dedicated exhibition spaces' at the time of its closure. This is not true. The word "dedicated" is clearly used by us to denote a space specifically designed for exhibitions. Arthouse never had one, let alone three of these. Pierce may have turned different parts of the building over to exhibitions (the basement had irregularly been used as an installation space before her arrival), but she could not somehow retrospectively include something omitted from the building in the first place. Ever since the 'new' technologies were first touted as tools for artistic production, there have been artists aware that the use of digital media would inevitably collide with the use of other media, and that new installational forms—requiring flexible and versatile spaces—would develop. Arthouse only accommodated these new forms partially, inadequately; this is inevitable given that it was prematurely conceptualised itself. Only now, a decade after vague plans for Arthouse were first mooted, and after both it and The Lux have ceased to exist, has FACT been able to open what promises to be a genuinely well-used and influential centre for the digital arts. (New media dedicated facilities in Scotland are noticeably absent from this discussion.)

Pierce maintains that artists formed "the majority of [Arthouse's] public." This admission is not necessarily something she should be too proud of. What happened to the idea that artists might communicate something to a wider community?

Furthermore, her emphasis of Arthouse's "unofficial, informal and unmediated exchanges" deserves investigation too; how transparent and open were these "exchanges", and to what extent were they initiated by and for people already very familiar with the building's facilities?

Pierce indulges in some rather cheap invective at the end of her letter. Specifically, she accuses me of being "fundamentally conservative" and of having only "the vaguest understanding" of that practice which Arthouse was intended to illuminate. The latter point hardly merits a response, except to say that as a practising artist, critic, lecturer and theorist I have investigated the use and conditions of digital technologies in the broadest of contexts, and for several years. I maintain that Arthouse was not a facility that provided the "public space" Pierce describes. Indeed, I believe it's both naïve and self-limiting to suggest that my criticisms of Arthouse and of the manner of its closure somehow "play into the hands" of those who seek to curtail art's field of influence. Rather the opposite. Were Pierce to run (or, perhaps, were she to co-operate, as an unpaid volunteer, in the running of) an organisation that really had the interests of artists at its heart, no doubt she would achieve far more than was possible at Arthouse; and no doubt, given the opportunity, she would be able to acknowledge this.

Some light can be thrown on these arguments if we turn to look at recent developments at Catalyst Arts in Belfast (another organisation with a ten-year history, but this time one actually conceived of and run by artists). Having been evicted and temporarily rehoused on Donegall Street by Laganside Corporation in late 2001, Catalyst were due to move into new premises at the start of this year. Protracted discussions amongst the Catalyst membership ensued: the proposed new building, Cotton Court, is a centrepiece of Laganside's 'Cathedral Quarter' development, a predictably cynical instrumentalisation of 'culture' in the name of private interests. Members were concerned that Catalyst should not be implicated in the engineering of yet another ghetto in Belfast (albeit a middle class one that calls itself a 'cultural quarter'), particularly at a time when artists have an opportunity to reach out and be involved in the city's material and conceptual reconstruction. More importantly, the refurbishment of Cotton Court, an old warehouse that is apparently one of the oldest buildings in the city, was carried out with little consultation with the prospective occupants. As Catalyst themselves have pointed out, large amounts of public money were squandered on inappropriate work, both in the Donegall



Street premises and at Cotton Court. Catalyst were told that the construction of an office space on the floors allocated to them in Cotton Court would be at their own expense.

Laganside's dual role as funding body and landlord was also proving problematic. Early on in the relocation, construction workers engaged in the demolition of part of Catalyst's old building spliced into the new gallery's electricity supply, running up a bill of more than £1,500. Catalyst refused to pay this and were subsequently disqualified from applying to Laganside for project funding. Interference in programming and difficulties regarding access to the temporary gallery further worsened the relationship.

In December last year, at a well-attended general meeting, the membership voted by a margin of eight to one not to move into Cotton Court. This was an extremely difficult decision to take for a number of reasons: Catalyst were breaking a contract that had been signed over a year beforehand and could conceivably be sued; there was no long-term venue available for Catalyst outside of Cotton Court; and whilst initial soundings had been made, it was by no means clear what the implications would be for the future funding of the organisation. Thus, on the basis of principle and in the desire to retain its autonomy, Catalyst took something of a leap into the dark.

Subsequently, Laganside decided not to pursue legal action for breach of contract, noting that it might be in both parties' 'mutual interests' if their strained relationship to date was brought to an end.

It's refreshing, and not a little rare, to be able to report that an artist-run organisation has chosen not to move into a multi-million pound building in the centre of a new 'cultural development programme', but has opted instead to develop its role as a facilitator of events and exhibitions, in spaces and venues of all descriptions. Catalyst operates as only one of a clutch of artist-run organisations in Belfast which routinely collabo-



rate with one another on every aspect of their activity.

While we're on the subject, it's worth noting that since Colin Darke wrote his article for this issue about events at the Orchard Gallery in Derry, the possibility of the building continuing to function as an artist-run space has emerged. It seems that the owners of the building would be very happy to see some form of artistic activity continue there now that the City Council has vacated the premises. The Orchard may have ceased to exist in its current shape, but it could yet be Derry's artists who decide what should replace it, at least until someone at the City Council can be a little clearer about what their plans are.

Queuing and waiting for success and recognition keeps artists tied to arts institutions in charge of distributing money and bestowing prestige. As with so many artists, Veroni's attempts to apply for grants through the Arts Council are taking him nowhere. Before a rarefied art scene, the lack of patrons, reliable or committed gallery owners, and a tight strand of neo-conceptual art as mainstream, Veroni's hopes of supporting himself through art are gone.

This series of mini-prints called 'The Lottery Project' are based on a survival plan: each print sold can buy a new lottery ticket.

With the money that you spent on each of these prints the artist will pay the gallery commission (£0.70), material and display expenses (£0.30), and a new lottery ticket (£1.00). Through this regular exchange of art for hope the artist is expecting to win the lottery one day and then move to more ambitious projects, like making bigger and better artwork or having a family.

It is a well known fact that lottery money goes in part to the Arts Councils. In that way you and the artist are still contributing to the arts (like it or not).

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Derry on its Hobby Horse

Colin Darke, March 2003

Derry's artists got together with some friends on 7th March to make some art together. We collaborated to make a large sculpture from art publications and carried out a performance piece which referred with a touch of irony to Anthony Gormley's "Field for the British Isles".

Not the best art any of us has ever made, certainly, but we were still delighted with our efforts.

The work was part of a day-long protest against the closure of Derry's Orchard Gallery, organised by a group of artists living and working in the city. We had just three weeks previously formed ourselves into a campaign group, calling ourselves Derry's Artists for Derry's Art (DADA) and this was our first public act, having previously written a letter of protest to Derry City Council, with a couple of copies to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

(Funny how a name can determine behaviour—when discussing the form that the protest should take, we found ourselves arguing whether we were being sufficiently DADAesque in our thinking. This approach to deciding on stunts designed to attract the media is in itself, of course, very unDADA; Tzara said in his *Dada Manifesto, 1918*, "The magic of a word—DADA—which for journalists has opened the door to an unforeseen world, has for us not the slightest importance.")

After more than twenty-four years as the central focus for contemporary art in the city, the Orchard Gallery has become the victim of short-sighted bureaucratic philistinism. The gallery's doors close at the end of the financial year and from April Derry will be a city with just one gallery—the Context, sited at the Playhouse Arts Centre. The Orchard will be replaced by the "Orchard Agency", aiming to find alternative venues for exhibiting work, along with commissioning public art works around the city. A fine idea, and one which we of course support. We always have supported this initiative, as the Orchard has included this approach almost since its inception in October 1978. Dressing up an old and up-and-running idea as something new and innovative is an old political trick, and it's more than a little insulting to think that we might fall for it.

The Council published a 'Draft Cultural Strategy' last year, written by the Orchard's first director Declan McGonagle (who has also run London's ICA and Dublin's IMMA). McGonagle had previously produced another report for the

Council, relating specifically to the future of the Orchard and outlining proposals for the development of contemporary art in the city. The second report acted as the basis for a consultation period, with public meetings held around Derry to discuss the proposed strategy.

As is so often the case with such initiatives, the consultation process was poorly publicised, and few of us were even aware that it was taking place. The Orchard's administration are claiming that artists simply did not bother to involve themselves with the consultation process; yet the gallery, which holds all of our names and addresses of in its mailing list, never thought to canvas our opinions directly on the proposals made in the Draft Cultural Strategy. Even if we had taken part, the information contained in the second report was inadequate for any real discussion, as its visual art element always referred, quite naturally, to the first report. This would, of course, be fine, if this document were available.

Not so. Requests for copies of the original document, outlining plans for the Orchard and the proposed expansion of visual art provision, were met with the response that it was 'not in the public domain'. Having commissioned a proposal for a cultural strategy from someone with artistic development and integrity as the basis of his thinking, the City Council has removed these qualities, in the interests of political and financial expediency.

At the time of writing, this report remains invisible, but we shall be receiving our copy soon. We do know that it includes proposals for the Orchard Agency, a new Orchard Gallery and a Derry Biennale. What we are getting is the first—the cheapest and least innovative—and with no information on what it will contain or how it is to be organised.

Derry City Council has behaved abysmally here. It has removed an institution which has made an enormous contribution to the artistic identity of Ireland, it has distorted Declan McGonagle's efforts at developing the arts in Derry and it has alienated the city's art community from its visual art programme.

Stop the War Stop the Killing



Edward Said

The UN Security Council has been meeting today to listen to the report of the weapons inspectors operating in Iraq and responses to it. I doubt there is a widespread consensus for war in the US, but there is no doubt that the administration led by President Bush and his associates are pushing for a war sooner rather than later. The ostensible reason given for the war against Iraq is that it's an imminent threat to the US, and that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction, of which none have been found. In theory Iraq threatens the US from a distance of 7,000 miles. From what we gather from the inspectors, Iraq in the 12 years since the first Gulf War (between Iraq and Iran, started 1980) is in a much depleted and weakened condition—being an imminent threat to the US is preposterous. They are not even considered to be a threat to their neighbours. Should bombing begin, it is to me a mystery if the excuse is really Iraq's military threat.

The other US administration line is equally confected: that Iraq might be distributing arms to al-Qaeda terrorists. There is no direct evidence. But since one of the alleged al-Qaeda people was supposed to be in Northern Iraq, it follows that Iraq and al-Qaeda are in cahoots to wreak terrible violence on the US and other countries. Then again, I don't want to minimise the nefarious quality of the Iraqi regime—its Human Rights record is one of the worst in the world and it is a state based upon repression and terror. But to suggest that Iraq is an immanent danger to the US and the rest of the world is extremely far fetched.

Would there be this kind of US military, diplomatic and political pressure placed on Iraq—and on the rest of the world to join the US in war—if it was a net exporter of oranges? Of course it isn't, it is an oil producing country with the proven second largest oil revenues after Saudi Arabia. It is also a leading Arab country which has gone through an horrendous cycle of sanctions imposed against it for the last 12 years. Sanctions and a very tight embargo which haven't affected Saddam Hussein and his regime at all, but which have affected the Iraqi population—with hundreds of thousands of people dead from malnutrition, the absence of medicine resulting in the onset of terrible diseases, plus the fact that the civilian and military infrastructures were destroyed during the last Gulf War by the US. All in all we have a state which is in an extremely weakened condition, with a rogue government (no doubt) and an extremely long suffering, punished population which, if there is a war, will bear the brunt of American power.

There are many reasons for this war. One of them is oil, and it is not a coincidence that Afghanistan near the Caspian Sea is in a direct line with the oil supplies and regions of the Arabian Gulf—all of which fall under direct American military and political hegemony in the event of a war. Although there is a hegemony right now, what the US seek are the assurances of vast oil supplies, the guaranteed control of this enormously important resource. Remember, China by the end of this decade will be using as much oil as the US already does. So, the contest for cheap and relatively accessible oil supplies is one of the reasons for this war, not so much the crimes of humanity committed by Saddam Hussein's regime, which it is important to remember was

politically and militarily backed in many of those crimes by the US and various European countries.

Another reason is that this is a highly strategic area of the world. There is a real felt need, partly as a result of 9/11, that the old order is no longer of use to the US—those undemocratic, repressive regimes in Iraq and other Middle East countries supported for over 50 years by the US and European allies. This area is unstable now, partly because the people have risen up against their unpopular rulers, but also because of the rise of political Islam—a much exaggerated force but still seen by the US because of 9/11 as a threat. There is a sense in which US interests—which since WWII have always been oil and Israel—would be better served in a realignment of the area, so that Israel and the US with allies like Turkey or India at a further remove, would better control and dominate the area.

Finally, the threat represented by Iraq is considered also to be a threat to the interests of Israel. It is important to remember that many of the hawkish members of the US administration—like Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle—have always been close to the Israeli right wing. Perle himself, head of the Intelligence Review Board of the Pentagon [see: 'Lunch with the Chairman', S.M.Hersh, p.18], was a political adviser to Netanyahu when he was a candidate for the Premiership of Israel. Perle argued that he should discard anything like a peace process, annex the West Bank and Gaza, expand the settlements, and perhaps in the future throw out a few more Palestinians so that the area would be relatively easy to control. So somehow the interests of Israel are very much part of this multifaceted war as seen by a right wing, neo-conservative group in Washington which believes Israel is best served by expansion, brutality and a continued contempt for the UN.

One important factor not usually taken into account by commentators in the West is the importance of Iraq to Arab culture and Arab civilisation. Iraq enjoys a particularly privileged place—during the Abassi period, from 750 AD, Baghdad was the capital of the world and for a period of 600 years was the capital of science, art, humanities, in what was then the civilised world and the core of the Arab Empire, which extended into Spain, Southern Europe, as well as Northern Africa, and to the East, today's Sri Lanka. So, the travail of the Iraqi people, as the White House circular suggests,



is to bomb Baghdad to produce "shock and awe" in the population. All of this is considered to be, for most Arabs and Iraqis, an attack at the very heartland of the Arab world, Arab people, Arab civilisation and of Arabism itself. And the US planners' reason for this is to break once and for all the spirit of Arab unity and nationalism, which has historically been a thorn in the side of Western Imperialism. The battle, I contend, is still going on for control of this rich area and for the self-determination of those people.

The link question which is never discussed in the media is Palestine. If you listen to Secretary Powell, all the commentators in the media (during what is the worst moment in the history of the American media when they simply support without question, comment or sufficient investigative energy what the administration says, and are themselves involved in stirring up hysteria for war and a kind of xenophobia against Iraq; a place which they have no idea of, which they personalise

All photographs: Aftermath of the Sabra and Chatila Massacres, Lebanon, 1982.

with this demonic figure of Saddam Hussein) and the furore over Iraq being in contravention of the UN Charter, it's never mentioned that aside from the US, which is also a state which is in contravention of numerous UN treaties and protocols, there is the question of Israel. Israel has been in contempt of 64 UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. For 35 years since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, it has systematically flouted the Geneva Convention, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and 64 resolutions drawing attention to abuses of human rights by Israelis. Sharon—who is now threatened with a law suit against him in Belgium for War Crimes committed during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon resulting in the massacres of Sabra and Chatila—has conducted a policy of purist repression against Palestinians which must be examined against the abuses of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The Israeli army has used Apache helicopters, missiles, rockets, F16 jets against civilian populations in the West Bank and Gaza. It has imposed curfews sometimes lasting over 200 days on a civilian population which is basically unarmed: there is no Palestinian Army, Navy or Airforce. Close to 2,000 people have been killed by the Israeli military, some designated as terrorists although none of them ever had trials. There has been a whole policy of “targeted killings”, “extra judicial assassinations” against Palestinians, sometimes whole families are killed by mistake or through “collateral damage”. The economies of the West Bank and Gaza have suffered an enormous and catastrophic economic blow on a day-to-day basis, partly because of the closures where no Palestinian can leave or enter, or go from one part of the same town to another; partly because of the deliberate policy of Israel razing agricultural ground, destroying it, confiscating land, building settlements on it; making it impossible for people to go to work, for students to study, for university professors and students to enter classes. This is the longest military occupation in modern history and yet the US connives in this to supply Israel. The total is \$135 billion since the beginning of the occupation. This is the largest amount of foreign aid ever given by any country to another country. In addition, in the UN the US vetoes resolutions which condemn Israel, which ask Israel to cease and desist for example from demolishing houses—60 houses alone this week and 21 people killed. But that does not even deserve a mention in the American media as they focus on the imminent threat to the US—the largest and most powerful military machine in the history of the world—from this incapacitated, tyrannical regime in Baghdad. All the while, as Sharon has openly said, his government has been abusing the Palestinian civilian population by attacking hospitals and ambulances, by making it impossible for people to have kidney dialysis and pregnant women to have their children in hospitals—they are held up in the rain and mud at barricades sometimes dying as a result. Trees are uprooted—an average of 896 trees have been uprooted every day by the Israeli Army since the beginning of the Intifada and that does not even touch upon the question of the settlers.

Israel entered lands that were Palestinian in 1967, including East Jerusalem which was annexed that year, and has implanted 400,000 settlers against every UN Resolution and Convention. These settlements are now connected to each other by a roads system which cost \$780 million to build, paid for almost entirely by the US, on which only settlers can travel in such a way as in Apartheid South Africa. The economy has been deliberately destroyed on the West Bank and Gaza by Israel. It has de-developed the economy of Palestine so that there is a rate of 65% unemployment. It is estimated that over 60% of the population lives beneath the poverty line of \$2 a day. Malnutrition, as the UN has been saying, is now an endemic structural problem for the West Bank and Gaza. About 70% of the population is in need of food because Israel will not allow them to grow their own, import it or even travel to places where they can get food. In the case of some of the villages near the green line, which have been fed or supplied to some degree by well intentioned

Israeli resisters bringing food in, that is now forbidden. The West Bank and Gaza is basically locked up. On the western side there is the sea, of which two thirds of the coast is closed to Palestinians. Three large settlements numbering 7,500 Israelis inside the middle of Gaza, chopping it up, are protected by 12,000 troops. Whereas 1.2 million Palestinians live like sardines in refugee camps, tenements and towns mostly filled with the stench of rubbish, which they are not allowed to remove; putrefying carcasses, stagnant water, in fact every possible condition of abject poverty, malnutrition and psychological trauma experienced by no other population on earth today. All this has been going on with the sponsorship of the US in a case of the most monumental human hypocrisy. As the US pushes an aggressive policy against Iraq, accusing it of every nefarious crime against its own interests under the cover of fighting terrorism, Sharon and his army pursue an active policy of collective punishment against Palestinian civilians.

While Israel enjoys US military support and unending financial support, the US will not even allow the UN to discuss the Palestinian question; even for International Observers to protect the Palestinians from human rights abuses carried out by Israeli troops who are encouraged in a kind of racist contempt to treat them like animals and make sure their pride and dignity as human beings are trampled upon. They're humiliated whether through random house searches, ransacking of buildings, vandalism of property, or through more brutal means where they remove the records of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, to make sure that Palestinian records of a collective national existence are erased forever. Those are crimes against humanity, active war crimes committed by acknowledged war criminals like Sharon, who in Israel in 1982 after the illegal invasion of Lebanon (the first modern instance of announced regime change) was convicted by an Israeli court of the responsibility for the massacres of Sabra and Chatila, which occurred under Israeli supervision.

Our protest against war has to be inclusive and has to deal with the issues which are connected to each other. That this military action against Iraq has to be seen as a part of a collective punishment, and that the problem of Palestinian refugees started in 1948 when Israel was established as a result of ruining and destroying Palestinian society. One has to understand and accept this is very much at the core of the tension between the Arab and Islamic world on the one hand, and the West, especially the US, on the other. That our battle against war is also our battle against human rights abuses, where ever they occur. We cannot be invidious and just focus on Iraq, bring them to their knees, occupy the country and rule it militarily just because Iraq is a net exporter of oil connected to the Caspian axis. There ought to be a broad front in the protests not only against US action in Iraq but also against US action in Palestine. It is simply ludicrous to hear President Bush describe Saddam Hussein as a Hitler, as a demon, as an evil man, and on the other hand, with a straight face, describe General Ariel Sharon as a man of peace, which he did in June last year.

Questions:

What immediate effect would an attack on Iraq sanctioned by the UN or otherwise have on the situation regarding Israel and Palestine?

How do you assess the chances of the demonstrations or the peace movements in the US?

What is the effect of the anti-terrorism laws in the US?

Is there a place for non violence as a response to any of this, either in Palestine, on the marches, or in relation to Iraq?

You wrote three weeks ago in the *Guardian*: “When will we resist”; we ‘the Arabs’. As you rightly said, the US is close to an attack on the Arab world to redesign the Middle East and control the oil, and you suggest that the Arabs remain passive and submissive and you call for a collective, genuinely Arab alternative. Could you outline this alternative?



Edward Said:

The likely effect of an attack on Iraq by the US, what would be the effect on Palestine? The most nightmarish scenario suggests that under the cover of a conflagration in Iraq with the world's attention turned to that locale, the Israeli government under Sharon might undertake what it calls a "transfer of populations"—use the opportunity of the distractions to drive out another large segment of the Palestinian population to places like Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. Although I think it's also unfeasible because we're dealing with a politicised and galvanised population that hasn't submitted to the terror tactics of Sharon. Speaking as a Palestinian, I am extremely proud of the fact that Palestinians have not surrendered, and that Palestinian life—in its terrible tatters today—is still going on. There will be resistance to an attempt to drive out large numbers of the population.

Another scenario is increasing the number of lands taken from Palestinians, while Sharon says he is willing to make a peace deal, in which case there will be little land left—the figure is now 40% of the West Bank and 75% of Gaza, the rest is annexed by Israel, taken for settlement, and Israel will continue to control the entrances, exists, water and air rights. So anything like a real sovereignty for the Palestinians is definitely not in Sharon's programme and the war in Iraq will make it easier for him (with the support of the US) to impose draconian solutions.

An attack on Iraq would be extremely deleterious to the Palestinians also because the attention of the world will be focused on Iraq and the tremendously needed humanitarian aid for food, shelter and health services required by the Palestinian population under siege, living in a system of Apartheid, will be suspended. There are already stories that UNRWA, the agency for Palestinian refugees, is running out of money. They have a few months left in funds and supplies. There is a humanitarian catastrophe in the offing for a population that has already suffered for 35 years under Israeli occupation.

There is also the possibility that more people will understand the linkage between Palestine and Iraq. That the Imperial hand in both places, the contravention of human rights and UN resolutions in both places, need to be considered together. What we are living through is a continued attempt, which has gone on for over 150 years, to keep the Arab countries of the Middle East divided, weakened and basically under outside domination. Imperial domination is still flourishing, the result being social distortion, wide spread military governments and human rights abuses that one associates with countries like Iraq and Syria.

The question about demonstrations in the US. This is the first time in modern history that there has been such a wide spread set of demonstrations and protests in the US before war begins. There's a very widespread feeling on the part of the population that this is an unnecessary war, that it's being waged for obscure and constantly changing purposes, that the war on terrorism that we were supposed to be fighting in Afghanistan has been forgotten, and that we are now in a state of war based on pre-emption (the new military doctrine of the US) that most Americans refuse. The demonstrations are serious and important and not to be underestimated in their effect on government in the long run. What's so important about them is that people are being asked to choose between being a rogue power acting out of enormous strength, obduracy, and a kind of blindness to everyone else, or acting like a member of the world community. And most Americans, like most people everywhere, want the latter: to be part of the world community bound by the laws of war and the conventions of the UN, etc. We are too small a world, and now because of the systems of modern electronic communication, no part of the world is distant or without its effect on any other part. So I think there's a dawning consciousness among vast numbers of Americans, certainly among the young.

As a result of the outrages of September 11th there has been an atmosphere of repression increasing over time in the US, with alarm shown

by the civil liberties communities, and especially communities of Muslims, Arabs and people of colour, for whom preventive detention, racial profiling and invasions of privacy have become routine. Many thousands of Americans and resident aliens in the US are invidiously discriminated against simply on the basis of their race, religion and country of origin. There is a mass hysteria, an atmosphere symbolised by the Terrorism and Patriot Act which makes it a crime, in a way, to be an Arab. There are many incidents of people sitting on planes and buses reading Arabic newspapers and being asked not to do so, or to leave, or being taken into custody because they disturb the other passengers. And people are picked up simply on their name, taken aside at airports and other public places because of this fear. I've seen the deliberate identification of Islam with terrorism which has occurred at least since the Iranian revolution of 1979. A foreign devil is very important to the foreign policy of the US—Islam and Muslim people are the foreign devil. Plus the fact that the Israeli government has waged an unceasing war against Palestinians under the rubric of fighting terrorism, which they were very clever to adopt as their policy. So there's a sense of justified vigilance and pre-emptive punishment which has caused wide sectors of the American public to be alarmed at the loss of civil liberties, the suspension of due process—for example the case of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, and many others throughout the US who have been picked up, not allowed to see lawyers, not charged, detained for three months at a time and then maybe re-detained. The atmosphere is such that people have to be careful of what they're told, what they say. There's a McCarthyite atmosphere on some American campuses where criticism of Israel and US policy in the Middle East is immediately equated with anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism.

I don't want to conclude on an entirely negative note—most people have been aroused in this country to the dangers of abuses to the constitutional rights and privileges that every American ought to enjoy. Which is one of the great prides of this country. But these rights are threatened. The government is deeply conservative, reactionary, and it wants submission and docility, rather than a democratically active, participating citizen. And it is the duty of intellectuals to try to remind people of our rights and our heritage as a people in search of more freedom, freedom through community and common goals rather than through the assertion of power and force. That the US is a capitalist society which has recently gone through tremendous revelations of corporate greed and corruption, plus the fact we're in the middle of a very severe economic recession, have awakened people to the abuses of which this system is capable—the fact that we don't have health insurance as you do; that the so-called welfare safety net has been removed due to neo-liberal policies beginning with the Clinton administration but certainly continuing now; the state of public education is disastrous, especially in large cities like New York, Baltimore, Los Angeles. A hopeful sign is that there is an awakened public consciousness now, that we needn't be patriotic, patriotic being one of the supreme US virtues towards everything that the President and his coterie of advisers want us to do.

As to the question of non-violence, I would prefer to use the phrase 'mass action', here and in the occupied territories. Every liberation movement has tried to protect itself from injury, killing and abuse of the kind that is heaped on Palestinians each day by the Israeli Army. There are instances of peaceful marches broken up by soldiers using live ammunition where 30 or 40 people are killed, or bulldozers demolishing houses with people in them, or the razing of the Jenin refugee camp in which many people lost their properties but also their lives. The Israeli army is not shy about using all its enormous weaponry, which includes weapons of mass destruction. Israel has an estimated 200 nuclear warheads plus biological and chemical warfare capabilities, and has not signed a non-proliferation or nuclear treaty. Against all that, one has to talk about organised mass action



in which large numbers of people impede, at great risk to their lives, the processes of segregation, property destruction, above all land expropriation. That's beginning to emerge as the principle means of struggle in Palestine. Most people feel that suicide bombing—which I've opposed from the very beginning—is counter-productive. It's of course an expression of desperation and a kind of terminal frustration, but in the end it brings nothing but more reprisals, more punishment and more suffering. There is now a search for democratic participation in mass protest. What we have is the slow emergence of national initiatives in the Occupied Territories, of people coming together to perform self-help and protest actions, actions that engage and mobilise Israelis, because you can't talk about self-determination in Palestine without also talking about the participation of Israelis in the same process. It's two people in one land, and that reality means that they have to share not only in each others' fate but in each others' troubles. There are all kinds of hopeful signs that will expand the struggle against militarism, for example young Israeli reservists who refuse to serve on the West Bank and Gaza.

The point I made in my article on submissive Arabs, please don't misunderstand. I was talking about the Arab regimes, which are unrepresentative, undemocratic, maintained by repression and force—every country in the Arab world (to a greater or lesser degree) is ruled by the secret service and the military. Most countries, including some of the most liberal in appearance like Egypt and Jordan, have very severe press laws where freedom of expression is highly circumscribed, and where the powers of the government—like the Israeli and US governments—claim to be fighting Islamic terrorism and have imposed very harsh measures on the population, making them isolated from their people. It's these governments that I was talking about, that now cringe in submission. They realise that their continuation in office depends on the patronage of the US and therefore will say nothing in public that might upset the US, for fear that after the war protection will be taken from them and they will fall prey to their people's desires and wishes. What I'm really talking about is the need for Arab intellectuals—writers, film makers, philosophers, journalists, the women's movement and human rights movements—to continue to mobilise as many Arabs as possible to enter the political struggle and not sit back waiting for an American military government to redesign the whole area. The great danger we face as a people, that all people face, is the imposition of government and power from above—whether from globalisation or military power of the sort the US wields—and the resultant depoliticisation. Informed in part by the internet, mass media and satellite channels like Al-Jazeera—some Arab channels have a wider range of discussion and opinion, and because they're satellite are not so liable to censorship and control by the government—there's a general movement towards mobilisation and a feeling that

if we don't take our fate in our own hands and become responsible for our future, it's not going to be done by the ruler and it's certainly not going to be done by the Americans.

There was an item in today's paper about a group of Iraqi opposition people who only two weeks ago were deeply impressed with how President Bush was committed to civilian democracy in Iraq, since then they have had meetings with the real people whom they're going to have to deal with (people like General Tommy Franks, the Pentagon and State Department Planners who are in charge of post war, post-Saddam Iraq) and they finally realised that the US administration's only interested in securing its interests in Iraq, in oil, and, as for the Iraqi people and the opposition, they can go fly a kite. That's the fallacy most people believe when they rely on and ally themselves with Imperial powers who they think will drive them gloriously into a liberated country. What is happening now is an awakening in the US, the Arab States and elsewhere in the world, that announcing a war and going at it with flimsy purposes and without fairness or justice are unacceptable policies. We live on a planet where people want to live together and not be subject to the enormous power of the last remaining super power like the US, and the people that rule it.

Question:

What are the likely consequences of the re-election of Sharon in Palestine and Israel?

Edward Said:

It seems to me his government, for all the appearance of strength and determination it tries to exude, is a troubled government. The most likely scenario is that Sharon will continue what he's doing, and under the cover of affairs of war in Iraq perhaps be able to do it with a little more impunity and more damage, but it's likely also that an election will be called, that his government will fall sooner rather than later. But I'm quite discouraged by the Israeli peace movement, the so called liberals, who claim that they were really defeated by the Intifada, that they were betrayed by Arafat's refusal to accept the Camp David suggestions in 2000. That's simply unacceptable hand wringing. First of all there's no reliable record of what was offered at Camp David, and if Arafat and his people refused it they must have known, having accepted so many preposterous things in the past, that this would not be acceptable to their people. And whatever we now know about the plan, it was that Israel was willing to return a percentage of the land (a very high percentage according to them) but it would be divided land, cantonised, with Israel controlling the spaces between. When Israeli propagandists in America—like *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman—keep saying the Palestinians were offered 95% and they turned it down, it's like saying prisoners run 95% of the jail, but of course the guards and wardens control the walls, exits, windows, water and electric supply. So the Israeli protest movement withdrew from the struggle against their own government's depredations, policy of occupa-

tion, demolitions and settlement building. There is no way anybody should be convinced by so-called liberal Israelis saying "we want peace but the Palestinians aren't doing their part." The thing to remember is, that if there is a military occupation, the burden is on the occupier and its citizens to end it, not on the oppressed people to stop resistance. The problem is to get rid of the occupation and the only people who can do that—aside from the Palestinians who are fighting it—are the Israeli citizens themselves. It is the Israeli government that has been committing crimes against humanity, against the Palestinian people.

This is an edited transcript of a live video link-up from Colombia University, New York, to public meetings called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Globalise Resistance, on 14/2/03. It was directly followed by a live video link-up from Gaza with Mrs Al-Durrah.

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Has the Gulf War taken place yet?

Daniel Jewesbury

Shortly after the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, Michael Ignatieff published a book called ‘Virtual War’¹. In it he argued that Kosovo was a new type of conflict, marked most particularly by the ability of Western nations to wage what he called ‘war with impunity’. This impunity had two defining characteristics. Firstly, ‘the citizens of the NATO countries... were mobilized not as combatants, but as spectators. The war was a spectacle... The events in question were as remote from their essential concerns as a football game’ (p.3). Secondly, the sheer wealth of the West means that, even with relatively small defence budgets, we can afford to fight wars and not suffer noticeable changes to our standard of living. Both these conditions, Ignatieff argued, were new, and fundamentally altered the nature of global power relations. ‘If Western nations can employ violence with impunity, will they not be tempted to use it more often? The answers... are not obvious. For the future depends not on us but on our enemies. They, like us, are drawing their own conclusions from the way we seek to avoid the mortal hazard of war’ (p.5). Contained in Ignatieff’s words is a warning: as we continue to enjoy such absolute asymmetry of power, we find ourselves inexorably drawn into other asymmetries: the only options available to the ‘enemies’ of such nonchalant belligerence are terrorism and guerilla warfare.

So it is that only three years after the book’s publication, its prophecies having come to pass, we must yet again find new theorisations of the global order, even whilst that order is still mutating. It has been suggested that we should put our deliberations to one side until the sandstorm abates and the vista becomes clear again; however, is it not possible that this new state of flux *is* (for some time to come, at least) the new world order? ‘Stability’ is supplanted by contingency, impunity by uncertainty, war without end, Amen.

If we return to Ignatieff and consider the way in which he describes the nascent phenomenon of ‘virtual war’ at the end of the twentieth century, we might find some ways of drawing out historical threads that can reconnect us with the world before September 11th 2001, when Ground Zero initiated an American Year Zero every bit as all-consuming as that of the Khmer Rouge or the Jacobins. We might trace some background to current crises in conceptions of ‘democracy’ and ‘society’, in addition to offering some correctives to what may be an occasionally deterministic or premature account on Ignatieff’s part. This is a complex investigation, however, since we’re dealing with two sets of schismatic events; first the ‘virtualisation’ of war, as Ignatieff sees it, with all the changes concomitant to that, and subsequently the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, and the commencement of the War on Terror. We therefore have to address two mutually interdependent determinisms, both of which are claiming, to a greater or lesser extent, to have witnessed the end of the world as we previously knew it.

Virtualities

Most of Ignatieff’s book is composed of articles and essays republished from other sources; only the concluding chapter (also called ‘Virtual War’) was written specifically for the book. It’s this chapter and its contentions that I want to consider in detail here, and to follow up. Before I begin that consideration, however, I want to examine some of the different potential meanings of the term ‘virtual’; Ignatieff uses it pointedly, in a specific context, but it has a variety of resonances that we should not overlook. These days, the word is most often used to refer to concepts and technologies connected with cyberspace and ‘Virtual Reality’ (a technology which, significantly, is almost always considered in terms of video games). Underlying all three of the meanings or connotations described below is a sense of some schism

between the ‘real’ and the ‘simulated’². War, it is routinely and blithely asserted in the media and by philosophers, political theorists and strategists, is now little more than a computer game³; Ignatieff comments, ‘The bombing of Baghdad was the first war as light show and the aerial bombardment of Iraqi forces was the first battle turned into a video-arcade game’ (p.168). Bear in mind two things, as you read on. Firstly, the phrase ‘shock and awe’ was briefly registered as a trademark by Sony, before they decided that this was in ‘bad taste’ (does this mean that the war in Iraq will not be coming to a Playstation™ near you soon? Of course it will, they just decided to do it with better taste). Secondly, the ubiquitous web video provider, Real.com, made this the first pay-per-view war. It ‘offered’ users of American media websites such as CNN.com and ABC.com the ‘opportunity’ to pay a subscription to view their live video streams from Baghdad.

Most immediately, then, ‘virtual’ refers to the way in which not only the everyday citizenry, in the West, are now removed from the fighting (mobilised, in the overwhelming majority, as spectators, rather than as conscripts or munitions workers), but so also are the military leadership themselves. According to the rhetoric of ‘precision bombing’ and ‘smart warfare’, war is fought remotely, with computer- and satellite-guided armaments.

The second level of virtuality concerns the increasing mediatisation / mediation of the war, the manner in which it has been delivered to ‘us’ spectators—as in a recent history of war reporting, from Vietnam to Qatar, Basra and Baghdad. Following the significant impact that images of the fighting in Vietnam had on public opinion in the US (and remember here the UK and US governments’ contrived dismay at Al Jazeera’s broadcasting of images of civilian casualties⁴), Western governments knew that, as communications technologies developed, much tighter control of the media would be required during wartime. The Falklands war took place only twenty years ago, and yet at the time footage still took two weeks to make its way back to TV studios in London. Reporters in the Falklands, ‘embedded’ as they were with the military, were generally much more compliant than their colleagues had been in Vietnam, taking a clearly ‘patriotic’ line rather than raising issues about the worth, or conduct, of the conflict (hardly surprising when even Michael Foot, then Labour leader, was falling over himself to express his support for the war). For the military, the Falklands was a media success, questions concerning the sinking of the Belgrano only emerging some time after the war.

It was not until a decade later, however, that the so-called new technologies started to change fundamentally the manner in which war was covered; nor was it necessarily in the way that is so often described. War reporters in Kuwait were the first to be able to take advantage of new satellite transmitters portable enough to be used in the field, meaning that live pictures of a war could, in theory, be beamed around the world; in addition, CNN was the first broadcaster to be able to offer twenty-four hour coverage of a war⁵. However, military concerns about what live TV coverage might potentially mean for the execution of a war strategy led to tight controls, such as the pooling of sanctioned video footage. Thus the news networks had all the technology required to cover the war as it happened, but were able to say almost nothing about it. What we were offered instead was the war as a pyrotechnic display, at a safe distance, even when, paradoxically, the images might be coming from the nose of an airborne Cruise missile.

Successive technological developments in the ten years since the Gulf have accentuated this dichotomy between filling the schedules of rolling

news channels and extended bulletins and actually finding something to report. Sony made an earlier appearance in the virtualising of war when it transpired that their walkman-sized DV editing decks were a great favourite with the Kosovan Liberation Army. The KLA became extremely adept at turning out propaganda and handing it, broadcast-ready, to journalists desperate for a story. It seems that US and British forces have taken this tactic into the mainstream with some relish in recent weeks; and now, of course, the journalists are conveniently placed within the army, ready to receive the story ‘as it happens’ (or perhaps, as it is ‘helped into happening’).

Finally, there is a sense in which the war in Iraq is virtualised simply because the political systems which justify (demand) it are themselves no more than the simulation of politics. In a supposedly ‘post-industrial’, ‘post-ideological’ age, we are denounced as naïve if we even lament this turn. Thus Baudrillard famously described the Gulf War as ‘the absence of politics pursued by other means’. Public political life no longer exists in the neo-liberal even-newer world order, where pragmatism rather than principle dictate policy. A simulated politics gives rise to a rolling war with no clear justification or endpoint (currently the choice is between régime change and the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, and there’s no clear indication yet where the roadshow will visit next).

Debunking the myth of isolationism (a further aside)

Isolationist exceptionalism—the sense of the United States being a city on a hill, safe from the fratricide of Europe—runs deep in the American electorate (pp.178-79).

It’s become a cliché to describe the way in which September 11th roused the US from its slumber, forced it to slough off its isolationism, to re-engage with global politics, and so on. The truth of these statements is usually seen as self-evident, but should proof be required, America’s former unwillingness to commit even to humanitarian and peacekeeping missions around the world (or at least to commit its infantry) is cited.

The idea that America pursued anything approaching an isolationist policy in the decade after the end of the Cold War is blatantly untrue. The 1980s saw a series of both covert and open interventions in Latin America, and continued US support for friendly despots elsewhere. Following the implosion of the communist bloc, the US Army did not abandon its many bases around the world, nor did the CIA cease to seek to influence the geopolitical order on the basis of US self-interest. That the US assists the continuing illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine is but one example of this, although Israel is one of very few steady themes in what is otherwise a capricious and opportunistic foreign policy.

The point of all this is simply to reiterate that ‘virtuality’, in all the above senses, has not delivered us into a ‘post-territorial’ age. And whilst there seems to be an overwhelming urge in the media and in political circles to describe the way in which everything changed after September 11th, such that the rupture threw up ‘new realities’, this is also misleading; what we find, in fact, after September 11th are persistent themes made more clear. One is that the physical presence of US forces in bases around the world is not only more important now than it was before (indeed the US can only conduct its wars with such impunity by both maintaining and strengthening these commitments), but that this global presence never really went away just because of the onward march of virtuality. Furthermore, even though openly illegal unilateral wars may have been frowned upon by the Clinton administration, the idea that before September 11th the US was a sleeping giant, a benevolent superpower reluctant

to interfere in the affairs of others, is quite clearly and demonstrably a myth.

Precision bombing, virtual armies, propaganda, lies and the new nation state

Ignatieff claims that ‘precision weapons’, armaments that could be remotely guided and controlled, were first developed in Vietnam, a war definitely not fought with impunity. He describes the way in which new conventional weaponry became a necessity due to the nuclear stalemate of ‘Mutually Assured Destruction’ (MAD):

The beauty of such weaponry was that, unlike the nuclear arsenal, they could be used. But only in a certain way. To make the use of these politically and morally acceptable, it was essential to increase the precision of their targeting;... and to reduce, if not eliminate, the risk to those who fired them... (p.164).

He goes on to state that Western advances in computer technologies, often explicitly led or commissioned by the military, finally sealed the fate of the Soviet Union. As Moscow clung to an industrial economy of scale, the US responded by committing itself to the new technologies. Ignatieff cites Mikhail Gorbachev, who described evidence of Star Wars (Reagan’s short-lived space-based Missile Defence System, recently revived by Bush Jnr.) as the one development which forced the Soviet Union’s capitulation⁶.

Ignatieff goes on to describe some other attributes of precision warfare, noting that ‘the aim of post-modern warfare’ is not ‘attrition and destruction’, but ‘to strike at the nerve centers—command posts, computer networks—which direct the war-machine... Command and control can be attacked both by direct missile bombardment and also by information warfare: electronic jamming, release of computer viruses, disinformation and propaganda’ (p.169). This is virtual warfare in nearly all senses of the word.

‘Cyberwar’ is just an extension of the old-style propaganda warfare that Psychological Operations (PsyOps) teams have been churning out for decades. It’s notable, however, now that journalists are on the battlefield and able to send their stories back instantaneously, how the propaganda war is much more consciously waged on the Home Front. Surely this is a central part of the ‘post-modern war’? David Leigh, writing recently in the *Guardian*, highlighted three types of ‘disinformation’.⁷ He summarises these as follows. ‘Level 1: Unconfirmed false reports presented as fact to make exciting news stories... Level 2: Disputed events presented as fact for propaganda purposes... Level 3: Military disinformation.’ There are many ways in which news agencies and embedded journalists conspire, whether consciously or not, to assist in the propagation of these various levels of lying. Into what category, for example, would we place the infamous ITN pictures of Bosnian prisoners at Trnoplje? In that case, ITN camera crews, journalists and editors conspired to give the false impression that prisoners at Trnoplje were kept behind barbed wire in a ‘concentration camp’ (the barbed wire behind which prisoners were seen actually comprised the animal pen into which ITN had placed their camera)⁸. Much more recently, the toppling of the statue of Saddam in Fardus Square (conveniently just outside the Palestine Hotel where the international press were staying) has been shown to have been a stunt organised by the US military and its ‘official’ Iraqi opposition, flown in by the Pentagon a few days previously. No more than around 75 non-US personnel were present at the event, and the square itself was sealed off by US Marines while the stunt went ahead⁹. An equally important level of disinformation, which requires a great deal of complicity between reporters and the military, is that of simple omission. In recent arguments about the ethics of embedding, journalists have striven to assert that their integrity, their ability to smell a rat, to maintain their cynicism, remains intact. What the military realised early on, however, was that, so long as the *agenda* was set by them, it didn’t really matter how it was reported. Could this be why ‘non-embedded’ journalists in Baghdad were labelled as the mouthpieces of the Iraqi régime by David Blunkett? (The vague accusations made by Blunkett were almost certainly directed most cate-

gorically at the *Independent’s* Robert Fisk.)

The arguments surrounding precision bombing themselves come into the frame of the propaganda war:

While precision guidance weaponry is supposed to reverse the twentieth-century trend towards ever greater civilian casualties, warfare directed at a society’s nervous system, rather than against its fielded forces, necessarily blurs the distinction between civilian and military objectives. The most important targets have a dual use. Television stations transmit military signals as well as information. Power stations run military computers as well as water pumping stations and hospitals. There is no guarantee that war directed at the nervous system of a society will be any less savage than war directed only at its troops (p.170).

After the negative publicity generated by the bombing of the TV station in Belgrade¹⁰ during the Kosovo campaign, the British government in particular was anxious to be seen to prosecute this war in as ‘sterile’ a manner as possible: this was the war in which the lights would be left on, demonstrating that in the four years since Kosovo precision warfare had once again advanced immeasurably. At the time of writing, the power and water are still off in Baghdad after several days (this no doubt due to the dastardly machinations of the otherwise invisible Ba’ath régime). This often repeated intention of the government, to strike at the régime and somehow leave the Iraqi people unmolested, alerts us to another ‘new reality’ that Ignatieff does not address. Whilst the government and media (and large, particularly hypocritical parts of the anti-war movement) assert that ‘we’ are fighting this war, collectively, as a nation, ‘we’ are not fighting ‘them’ (the Iraqi people, collectively, as a nation). So what entity, exactly, are we at war with? What is nationhood if it is not nation states who fight wars? Is it too now virtualised, in some way? The people of Iraq, we are told, are glad that the United Kingdom and United States—us—have liberated them, because ‘we’ have taken on their régime. Then again, the people of the United Kingdom clearly did not approve of this conflict before it started. This is, we learn, a new, oxymoronic phenomenon: an *imperial war of national liberation*. This should alert us to some profound difficulties in our understanding of what exactly the nation state is in this virtualised, post-September 11th world. It seems infinitely mutable; on the one hand, the ‘democratic’ nations who wage this war presume that the executive is entirely inseparable from the people who confer its legitimacy; on the other, the despotic ‘rogue states’ against whom this war is waged have an exclusively parasitic relationship to their subjects. Unfortunately there are plenty of good despots whose relationship with their people is as yet undetermined. In all cases the same dictum seems to apply: the Leader is the People.

Having won the Cold War by virtue of its high-tech, post-industrial economy, the West is now caught in a peculiar paradox of the ‘virtual war’. Even though they allow servicemen’s and women’s lives to be saved and wars to be fought ‘with impunity’, the military resists the wholesale adoption of the new technologies and the new warfare, simply because it, like the old Soviet Union, depends on economies of sheer scale. A large army is ‘reassuring’ precisely because it mobilises, by implication, the threat of attack. As long as this cycle continues, the army can be confident that its future is guaranteed. A scaled-down, technological army, even if it possesses all the firepower and might of its predecessor, *appears* to be an acknowledgement that the ‘threat’ has diminished, and thus one of two things must happen: either people start to feel less secure, or, conversely, they understand that their security is no longer dependent on a large national army, and the armed forces’ insulation from the vagaries of the information economy disappears. Ignatieff takes up this theme: ‘If you have Cruise missiles, why do you need all those airplanes? If you have precision guided weapons launched from submarines, why do you need all those aircraft carriers and destroyers?’ (p.172)¹¹.

Kosovo, then, was not really the ‘virtual war’ that it might have been, because the military did

not want to adopt all the new technologies that the administration wanted to deploy. And in many ways, the war in Iraq has been both ‘more new’ (politicians now realise that they must at least make the appearance of wanting to kill fewer civilians, however credible that may be) and ‘less new’ (ground forces with heavy artillery were deployed, and tanks laid roads behind them in order to establish supply lines). Ignatieff highlights a previous conflict between generals in the army and defence chiefs in the Pentagon:

... the central claim of the new technological gospel was that computers, battlefield sensors and spy satellites could dispel the ‘fog’ of war—the chaotic uncertainty in which battles unfold; and eliminate the ‘friction’—adverse terrain, climate, equipment failure, troop morale and other incalculable factors—standing in the way of military victory. Generals like Norman Schwarzkopf were skeptical: they had bitter combat experience of both fog and friction in Vietnam. They also knew that the ‘systems analysts’ of the Pentagon had promised then that new technologies married to new tactics... would dispel the fog and grease the friction of warfare. And they hadn’t.

Vietnam veterans like Schwarzkopf were also angered by the argument... that putting troops on the ground was no longer necessary... Sooner or later, they argued, the army would need to put its soldiers on the ground to fight their way in and take and hold ground (p.173).

The very recent and open disagreements between General Tommy Franks and Donald Rumsfeld about the size of force that would be needed in Iraq are only the most recent example of a conflict that has been continuing for at least the last fifteen years.

Kosovo, Ignatieff maintains, occurred ‘in mid revolution’. ‘America... has not yet reorganized its troops around the strategic doctrine which the revolution in military affairs makes possible: air-lifted maneuver-based warfare by lightly armed squads, working in and around enemy lines, to call in high precision fires from naval and space based assets¹². To some extent, America and its NATO allies fought a virtual war because they were neither ready nor willing to fight a real one’ (pp.175-6). This throws up some confusion. After September 11th, should we conclude that the ‘revolution’ has been completed, since the tactical pattern Ignatieff describes sounds very much like that deployed in Iraq (at least those parts we know about); or is there a certain amount of ‘fog’ surrounding this too? Was this war more ‘real’, in that it (eventually) was waged in the most part by large infantry and Marine battalions, or more ‘virtual’, in that it deployed tactical airstrikes and ‘precision bombing’?

Virtual democracy, virtual humanitarianism, ‘virtual consent’ and other hollow noises

Writing only three years ago, Ignatieff was able to claim that ‘[l]eaders... address their electorates and afterwards pollsters consult samples of citizens to see just how far they support what the leader has in mind... When leaders call for more risk than an electorate will support, the polls pull them back into line’ (p.177). Not this time. The government of the United Kingdom very nearly unseated itself, such was its determination to go to war in the face of public disapproval of such an action (including the largest demonstration ever held in the United Kingdom).

In a section entitled ‘Virtual consent’ Ignatieff writes that ‘[t]he power to give or withhold consent to war is an essential element of the freedom of citizens’ (p.176), but goes on to note that in the years since the Korean War, no formal declaration of war has been made by either Congress of the Houses of Parliament.

This bypassing of the constitution is assisted by linguistic subterfuge. Since constitutions state that war requires a declaration to be legitimate, the word ‘war’ never passes a leader’s lips... The word ‘humanitarian’ figures prominently (p.177).



According to US Marines, the US flag that was put on the face of Saddam on 9/4/03 was the flag that was flying over the Pentagon on September 11.

In the recent simulation of political dissent that immediately preceded this war, both on the streets and in the House of Commons, what actually happened? Tony Blair was able to override the wishes of the British people on this issue, not in spite of, but *because* we live in a 'democracy'. The question we should be asking is not 'how could this happen in a democracy' but 'what does democracy mean'. Members of Parliament were able to enter the House and vote on a government motion, and on various amendments, not on the basis of what their constituents might have wanted (those whom they are elected to represent), but solely on the basis of their consciences (and career ambitions). Thus 'consent', such as it was, was given to an illegal conflict, and this was not anti-democratic but *part of our democratic system*. There is surely yet another irony in the fact that our own democratic system allowed the clearly-heralded wishes of its citizens to be over-run in the name of providing 'democracy' to someone else. 'Our vision for the future of Iraq is of a country free of repression able to live peacefully alongside its neighbours and develop in a way its own people choose. I believe it is a progressive vision.' So wrote Tony Blair in a letter emailed to all Labour Party members after the vote in the Commons.

But if war in the future is sold to voters with the promise of impunity they may be tempted to throw caution to the winds. If military action is cost-free, what democratic restraints will remain on the resort to force?... Democracies may well remain peace loving only so long as the risks of war remain real to their citizens. If war becomes virtual... democratic electorates may be more willing to fight especially if the cause is justified in the language of human rights and even democracy itself (pp.179-80).

What has become apparent from the rhetoric that preceded and has accompanied the war, is that we are entering a new era where 'democracy' needs constant protection from a vaguely mobilised terrorist threat. That this is a circular argument should hardly need reiterating by now. Nor should it need to be said that 'humanitarian warfare' has delivered us—and this time quite without irony—to a state where peace is literally war. It's just so easy that way.

Ignatieff describes how the Anti-War campaign in the States helped to bring the Vietnam War to an end. One lesson of the virtual war is that, once it has started, it cannot be stopped by 'public disapproval'. This war, which needed no public approval to begin, could theoretically have been prevented by a sustained anti-war campaign, had that very clear mandate been reflected in the House of Commons. If parliament had voted against British involvement in the war, it is doubtful that American troops could have fought the war alone, from both the north and south of Iraq. However, once hostilities began, it was clear that the pretense of seeking approval was over.

Inconclusion

Some of Ignatieff's own conclusions can be held up and re-examined in the light of subsequent developments. Whilst they remain useful, there are a few points that are striking now for their premature obsolescence. 'Virtual war,' he writes, 'proceeds to virtual victory' (p.208). This is clear enough. When we consider the conflict in Afghanistan, can we say for sure when it ended, or even whether it has ended? The Gulf War never really ended, since US and UK planes carried on bombing Iraq in the subsequent twelve years. And what was the effective outcome of Kosovo? 'Wars fought in the name of the human rights of other nations' national minorities are bound to be self-limiting. We fight for victory and for unconditional surrender only when we are fighting for ourselves' (pp.208-9).

But this time round, according to one of the excuses at least, we were fighting for ourselves, to protect against the threat of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Or were we fighting for the human rights of the Iraqi people? Or to topple a régime that was no longer useful? At least this much is certain, there appears to be no way this war can ever really end, since there is no-one to surrender to the occupying army ('George Galloway', suggested one wag in the House of

Commons). And the power vacuum which immediately followed 'liberation' has not gone away, despite the assertion that US and UK forces are now policing the streets of Iraqi cities.

For Ignatieff, of course, the concept of régime change *as an overt policy* was still a distant and unlikely possibility (even though, as I have pointed out, the US has been changing régimes covertly for many decades).

A rogue state is judged to be better than no state at all. A Serbia and an Iraq that remain intact, under despotic leadership, are both preferred to societies dissolving into civil war. And since—a further contradiction—Western nations believe in self-determination, they are unwilling to occupy these defeated states and rebuild them from the bottom up in a properly imperial fashion (p.209).

Yet this is precisely what we find ourselves confronted by now: virtual victory, for sure, in that it remains as inconclusive as any of the campaigns that Ignatieff lists; but for different reasons. 'We' have toppled the régime, and 'we' will set about installing a new one, but in the interim 'we' do not want to take responsibility for the anarchy that ensues. And the transition will be long, and complex, and uncertain, and 'we' may not even get the régime we wanted in the end...

Ignatieff's arguments are tainted by a kind of determinism, an 'endism' (linked to the arguments propagated originally by Francis Fukuyama that we had reached the 'end' of history with the collapse of the Soviet bloc), that we should always be careful to avoid. This applies as much to prescriptions concerning the 'post-9/11 world' as to Ignatieff's pre-September 11th arguments about virtual war.

We can close by reconsidering one of the themes with which began this essay, that of terrorism. Conor Gearty, an expert on the way in which Western nations use the threat of terrorism to curtail civil liberties, wrote in 1997 on some paradoxes that this threw up¹³. After signing the Oslo Peace Accords with the PLO in 1994, the Israeli government was in a precarious position: it could not simply walk away from the White House saying that the terrorist threat was no more, since the fear of it had been so carefully fostered for the preceding 45 years. Nor could it admit as much. Thus, by agreeing peace, the 'moderate' Israelis effectively ensured their own downfall. The terrorist threat had to be re-articulated, but the 'people' refused to credit this re-articulation¹⁴.

So the current terrorist threat must be kept alive, not diluted, if the same fate is not to befall the neo-conservative administration in Washington. 'If Western nations can employ violence with impunity, will they not be tempted to use it more often? The answers... are not obvious. For the future depends not on us but on our enemies. They, like us, are drawing their own conclusions from the way we seek to avoid the mortal hazard of war' (p.5). This is one of Ignatieff's prescient insights that remains unchanged by subsequent events, indeed it is substantially proven.

Speaking recently in Paris, Jean Baudrillard, who got into so much trouble for stating that the Gulf War 'would not take place', 'was not happening' and then 'did not take place', described a variation of this interrelationship¹⁵. Re-animating the 'Master:Slave' dialectic of Hegel, Baudrillard suggested that terrorism was now victorious. The Master, he said, was always that which 'gave life' to the Slave, 'he who has no right to his own death'. The suicide bomber, however, reclaims their own death, and thus unseats or deposes the 'Master'. America, however, still engaged in the work of mourning September 11th, is unable to control or 'own' its 'death(s)' and so becomes the slave. As US forces wander around the globe in search of retribution, they merely act a part which has already been written for them. But this revenge can never be exacted; if it were, if terrorism were 'defeated', 'we' should have to stop fighting it. Western governments gave life to the logic of the terrorist threat, but it surpasses their control, and cannot be readily extinguished, as Yitzhak Rabin discovered.

Perhaps this argument seems to overdramatise the effect that any informal or guerilla resistance can have against the only global superpower: there is really no 'dialectic' to speak of, we could

argue, such as the asymmetry. Furthermore, the threat presented by Saddam Hussein, al-Qaeda, and whoever else may come into the frame, is massively overstated, for economic and political ends. Baudrillard does not mention (as Gearty implies) that if terrorism didn't exist, governments would have to invent it, so convenient is the 'threat' in justifying the withdrawal or curtailment of civil liberties. Whichever way we choose to approach this problematic, it seems 'we' have got ourselves into a quite intractable predicament by attempting to virtualise a world that, every so often, insists on asserting its own reality.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Michael Ignatieff (2000) *Virtual War* (London: Chatto & Windus)
2. This is intensely problematic; virtuality is nothing new. Enlightenment ontology and epistemology, by constructing the sovereign subject *prior to the world*, also constructs the technological drive for mastery over the world that is at the heart of Virtual Reality. The world is objectified, turned into usable data, or 'standing reserve' in Heidegger's terms. VR, which places us literally at the scopic centre of a fantastic universe, fulfills the aims of modernity, rather than surpassing them. See Martin Heidegger (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (London: HarperCollins)
3. Bizarrely, one of those who has most recently criticised the media for turning war into a 'spectator sport' and a 'reality TV show' is none other than the gamesmaster himself, commander of British forces Air Marshall Brian Burridge.
4. See also www.informationclearinghouse.info
5. See TBN, 'Video from the Battlefield', <http://www.umich.edu/~newzies/main/satellite/satelitevideo.html>
6. Star Wars operates as a very efficient 'virtualisation of the threat'. Since governments rely on cultivating fear (of the threat of terrorism, or of hostile states, or of economic instability) to justify war (and thus maintain their power), Star Wars, a virtual weapons system if ever there was one, itself escalates the conflict, rather than pre-empting or preventing it. It is thus an offensive, rather than a defensive, weapon, as Gorbachev surely recognised.
7. David Leigh (2003) 'False witness', *The Guardian*, April 4th 2003, p. 19
8. See www.spiked-online.com/Articles/00000002D0E3.htm for an account of how *LM* magazine was shut down for daring to report this fabrication.
9. For a wide-angle shot of the square during the 'toppling', go to <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article2838.htm>
10. See <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/library/facts/bombed-RTS.html> for a contemporary account of the bombing from a Serbian political website.
11. He notes that in the decade after 1989 defence spending in the US fell from six to three percent of GDP (although after September 11th this has begun to climb again). In a recent lecture, he comments that even the reduced spending on defence (latest figures, for 2002, are \$336 bn, or 4% of GDP) represents an enormous amount of money: only such a rich nation can put so little of its budget into defence and still fight wars without feeling the economic effects at home.
12. What Donald Rumsfeld, with no discernible trace of irony, called 'lightning war'. See <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2002/02/01022002104506.asp>
13. Conor Gearty (1997) *The Future of Terrorism* (London: Phoenix). See also Gearty, ed., (1996) *Terrorism* (Aldershot: Dartmouth)
14. Interestingly, the foremost theoretical proponent of the terrorist threat was none other than Benjamin Netanyahu, precisely the figure who stood to gain from the downfall of the Oslo Accords.
15. For a French report on the discussion between Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida in Paris on the 19th of February, see <http://www.humanite.presse.fr/journal/2003/2003-02/2003-02-21/2003-02-21-058.html>

TERMINALS AND FRONTIERS: art practice, campaigning and progressive change

*Lalchand Azad talks to video and digital artist Kooj Chuhan from the group Virtual Migrants, about the -
ory, practice and in particular their set of works col -
lectively titled 'Terminal Frontiers' which bears the
strap-line 'deportation, terror and murder by paper'.*

LALCHAND: Virtual Migrants have produced educative works, artistic works, and worked in association with campaigns. How do you see the relationship between these areas of activity?

KOOJ: Campaigning is generally to gain support and lobby—whether through militant action or otherwise—for a specific change and to provide focal activity for progressive energies. Political education is to impart positive or suppressed information and ideas, to generate critical discussion and present systematic, coherent, alternative perspectives and practical approaches; also to assist your understanding of your own position among the power structures of society. Progressive art practice in this context is that which enables heartfelt engagement with the ideas, structures and human realities which political education deals with.

The question is how these fit into social or political change. For any given issue or theme, the associated campaigning, education and art practice will be part of a movement whether closely and actively or distantly and with minimal reference. Change with any significance, foundation and continuity can only be produced if the elements of a movement can support each other. Ultimately, fundamental political change will only take place when a whole range of diverse and developed elements of a mature movement can be organised cohesively and integrated within a logistical and philosophical framework. In Britain at the very least this is a long way off, so for now let's talk about appraising current art practice in relation to campaigning.

Central to Virtual Migrants' work has been a connection with anti-deportation campaigns for some years. These campaigns are part of a movement supporting mainly asylum seekers to gain legitimate refuge in this country where it has been denied. Over a long period of time—including the twenty years since I first got involved in such campaigns—the success of such campaigns has not moved forward despite certain forms of organisation within the movement having advanced—laws have tightened and people are being snatched and unfairly deported more than ever. Maybe this isn't the fault of the movement and is just inevitable, along with the wider downturn of political consciousness over the same period. On the other hand, maybe the right seeds were just simply not sown way back. Maybe short term victories were the order of the day and swallowed



up all available energy, in which case we should be able to redress this with benefit of hindsight.

LALCHAND: So is Virtual Migrants about sowing seeds?

KOOJ: Recently we have worked on two responses—an educational CD-ROM and the Terminal Frontiers series of art works. The almost unfunded CD-ROM, titled 'We Are Here Because You Were There'—which me and Aidan (Jolly) put together with a lot of contributions—is an introductory critique about immigration and asylum in Britain, particularly geared towards schools key stage 3 onwards. In compiling material for the CD-ROM we realised that such introductory perspectives and information simply did not exist in any form—we had to write it ourselves rather than being able to modify existing literature that possibly should have already been available. Perhaps that in itself answers the question about whether seeds were sown before and whether we might be considered to be sowing a few? I mean, after all these years it really feels to me that I have had to create this CD-ROM to move forward from the history of the legal discrimination focus which has dominated critical literature about deportations. The theoretical broader base of links and contexts has never been established, let alone popularised. The CD-ROM serves to introduce a broader contextual base while the Terminal Frontiers art-works allow passionate and empathetic connection with the ideas in a vivid, moving and memorable way. But this needs to be part of a movement of sowing similar seeds if worthwhile fruits are to be reaped in the future since we are up against reactionary ideological seeds being sown all the time.

LALCHAND: And how does this fit in with the process of the campaigning activity?

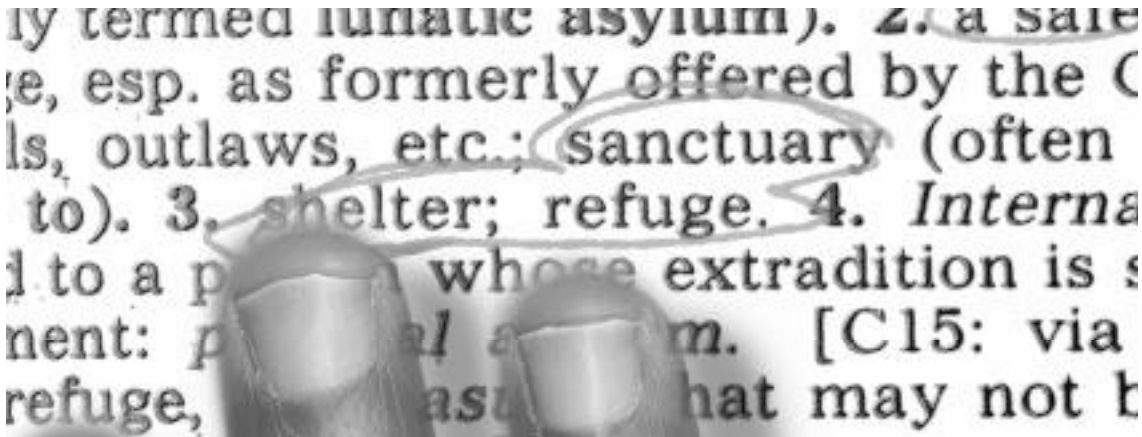
KOOJ: The CD-ROM addresses the need to impart information and perspectives to a broad cross-section of the public. We felt this to be particularly important because of the power of the media in areas where there are no refugees yet people are very anti-asylum, and also because of the lack of any involvement of a campaigning or progressive voice in such geographic areas. In fact, much sincere progressive involvement of local campaigners is directed towards assisting and working with the victims of state immigration policies, which may be welcome but leaves behind the more awkward effort to debunk myths and encourage proper debate with local indigenous people. I might go on to argue a similar process having contributed to the rise of the BNP around Greater Manchester to show it is part of a broader tendency, and how the



results of this lack of 'seed sowing' can allow some seeds from the far right to be successfully planted instead. Basically, I am saying that there are too few activists who venture outside 'converted' territory, and while doing so may feel the most unrewarding and even the least mobilising it may in the long term be the most politically useful. Perhaps there is a short-termism about much activism and campaigning, whereas serious political education is a long-term affair through which we are trying to lay the foundations for the future. I think there is a general lack of understanding among the left, progressives and minority activists about the possible roles of art other than as putting on a benefit or cultural event, or providing promotional media.

LALCHAND: And within progressive art practice is there perhaps too much 'preaching to the converted'?

KOOJ: Having used the phrase myself I have to say it is a really misleading and unconstructive concept. It certainly is an accusation levelled at progressive artists but it misrepresents the needs of progressive movements. Similarly, my arguing for the greater sowing of educative seeds is not the same as preaching to the 'non-converted'. First of all, what is 'converted'? Within any group supporting progressive activism there are many differences of opinion, a range of contradictions and (like for everyone else) many suffer from a lot of misinformation from the dominant discourses. There is little opportunity to explore, understand and focus, or to resolve perspectives and further questions. Art and media works are a key way in which people can come together and do this in a less didactic way and retain a closeness to the central concerns, a sense of purpose, along with the 'sing it together' sharing of common ground which necessarily sustains any interest-based group. Though didacticism also has its place—for example the 'We Are Here...' CD-ROM which was intended as an educational work with a capital 'E'—for use in schools and so on rather than as an art product. Having said that, it is certainly no more didactic than any school history book and probably less so; didacticism has to be placed in context and we should challenge those accusations of being didactic and dogmatic when indis-



criminally used against work which states a progressive critique.

LALCHAND: Lets move on to the Terminal Frontiers exhibition. Can you briefly describe the project?

KOOJ: It was a two-year long project with a number of sections which resulted in five different electronic art works being produced by a range of artists at different levels, including Keith Piper, with a range of contributions including from people seeking asylum and also from school children. The processes involved in creating the works were very intensive with a general attempt to scratch below the surface at the underlying causes for and contexts around issues to do with asylum and globalisation, while at the same time wanting to be true to our personal responses to these issues. It's all well documented on our website.

LALCHAND: One of the two key pieces (Keith Piper's being the other) was the 'What If I'm Not Real' installation which you directed and which involved collaboration with a number of artists. How did this work and what was it about?

KOOJ: 'What If I'm Not Real' was developed through much collaborative discussion with the entire group of six artists, which included five of migrant origin. Across three screens in a circular arrangement, accompanied by other sculptural elements, the viewer can follow the simple movements of the adult, child and official on their respective screens producing a visual narrative accompanied by finely crafted, multi-directional and alternating musical atmospheres. Among other things, the adult tries to sew together the borders of two maps with a thread that will always be too short, the child tries to piece together assorted fragments of photographs of faces, and the official both sends off military vehicles and receives money from the 'ground' of water. The

interplay between the characters leads to a final retaliation from the adult, although equally the power of the piece is that it allows a range of mentalities between aggressor and underdog to be woven together, explored and played out. The mask work and plain garments were intended to minimize the specific gender and cultural references while at the same time keeping the sense of character and drama—the intention was to create a simpler and more universally applicable set of meanings.

LALCHAND: Originally coming from an expression of a group of artists, how does it work as art and as a contribution to progressive change?

KOOJ: Well, the work was very much our personal response to the issues presented before us, though we clearly wanted the final work to support our political sympathies. Being true and authentic to yourself and also to your politics and beliefs is a difficult trick to play and takes some commitment, arguments and a learning curve to achieve. The work is incredibly rich with personal approaches and ideas such as the sense of opposites which was so critical to our poet Tang Lin. The characters were all placed on water suggesting on the one hand a relief from the problems of land—both which the migrant has left and also which the migrant must go to—yet on the other hand the disturbing sense that as land creatures they can't float there forever and will need to leave this temporary respite. Blood is also used to represent both life and death with the adult migrant finding her own resolution by using her own blood along with that of others as a form of fuel. Keith Piper's immediate comment was, 'God, the production values are really high!' And a number of people who have generally held the painfully common view that 'political art is just an excuse for a slogan at art's expense' were all persuaded otherwise once they had seen this work. In fact, a fuller text about its aesthetics would be a significant piece in itself

but unfortunately the work's strength of provocative content usually leads the discussion away, as it will do now.

As with many such works, it is essentially about engaging people with human feelings and realities at a deeper level than facts and statistics, managing to emotionally distil global processes and relationships into simple, universal human narratives. It is clearly non-didactic, allowing exploration of a range of metaphors within a structured framework, yet still makes a clear statement that is largely free from specific cultural references. It reached out to those interested in the art and the issues, and to art audiences more generally who would not normally frequent such a space. Further to this, it has stimulated interest in such work amongst artists and art spaces. I would add that the whole set of Terminal Frontiers works—along with the CD-ROM—is a compelling, complementary combination at all levels. One of the works was designed to be portable and toured various public and community venues away from the gallery space. Even though we had variable responses to this 'community tour', its value and possibilities are enormous and we want to try it again. It is part of our commitment to make work geographically accessible, even if demanding, while simultaneously avoiding it being marginalized from the mainstream where it can also be seen in a more dedicated environment.

'Terminal Frontiers' will be coming to Street Level gallery in Glasgow this autumn, and is due to continue touring through 2004. The show was premiered at Castlefield Gallery (Manchester) in late 2002 and was subsequently shown at the ICA (London). The artists involved in the Terminal Frontiers series of works are Kooj Chuhan, Aidan Jolly, Tang Lin, Hafiza Mohamed, Miselo Kunda-Anaku, Jilah Bakshayesh and Keith Piper.

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Climate Change:

Prognosis And Courses Of Action

Phil England

As the USA launches an illegal invasion and occupation of the country with the world's second largest proven oil reserves, it's as good a time as any to step back and look at the state of the bigger environmental picture. Fifteen years after NASSA's Dr James Hansen first warned a congressional panel that the world was warming are we any closer to addressing the problem of climate change? Where is unchecked warming leading us? Have we, as a global community, achieved a commitment to action that is sufficient to avoid global catastrophe? If not, what can we do about it?

The science

Since the facts about climate change are often shrouded in fog to the extent that many people are in doubt as to whether or not global warming is benign, first: what is the state of the science?

The world's leading authority on the science of climate change is the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Programme. The IPCC brings together over 2,000 of the world's leading climate scientists and its Assessment Reports represent summaries of the latest scientific consensus.

Its Third Assessment Report published in 2001 is a document to give pause. The 0.6C increase in global mean temperature over the 20th century, it says, is likely to have been the largest increase of any century during the past 1,000 years and has already produced observable, dramatic changes including widespread retreat of mountain glaciers, a decline in Arctic sea ice thickness of about 40% during late summer to early autumn, a 10% loss of snow and ice cover, warming oceans, sea level rises of between 0.1 & 0.2 metres, more frequent and intense warm El Nino episodes and changes in patterns of rainfall, cloud cover and temperature.¹

News of observable impacts on the natural world—such as “thawing of permafrost, later freezing and earlier break-up of ice on rivers and lakes, lengthening of mid to high-latitude growing seasons, poleward and altitudinal shifts of plant and animal ranges, declines of some plant and animal populations, and earlier flowering of trees, emergence of insects, and egg-laying in birds”—has become part of the background noise of our society. Yet, out of everyday sight, some natural systems that are particularly vulnerable to climate change may be undergoing significant and irreversible damage including “coral reefs and atolls, boreal and tropical forests, polar and alpine ecosystems, prairie wetlands, and remnant native grasslands.”

But climate change also has wide ranging impacts on the human systems of “water resources; agriculture (especially food security) and forestry; coastal zones and marine systems (fisheries); human settlements, energy and industry; insurance and other financial services; and human health.”²

The UK government has funded its own assessments of how climate change will impact over the coming decades. The temperature over central England has risen—beyond the global average—over the course of last century by 1°C and the mean temperature is expected to rise by a further 2 to 3.5°C by the 2080s depending on the emissions scenario. Winters will continue to become

wetter and intense rainfall events will continue to increase in frequency. High temperature extremes will become more common and low temperature extremes rarer. Sea-level rises and extremes of sea level will occur more frequently. And whilst the thermal growing season will increase, the summer soil moisture will decrease.³

But while we are relatively well placed to adapt to these changes, it is the world's poorly resourced majority that will suffer most. The IPCC notes the low adaptive capacities of the poor and their high vulnerability. It details the expected changes for each region—an increase in droughts and floods in Africa, for instance—along with the degree of confidence with which they can be predicted. It is in the developing world that loss of life will be greatest and the impacts of climate change will serve to “increase the disparity in well-being between developed countries and developing countries.”

In 2001 a Red Cross report noted that natural disasters had doubled between 1995 and 2000. Eighty-eight percent of those affected and two thirds of those killed during the 1990s lived in the least developed countries. The report warned that “Recurrent disasters, from floods in Asia to drought in the Horn of Africa, to wind-storms in Latin America, are sweeping away development gains and calling into question the possibility of recovery.” Aid agencies capacity to adequately respond will soon be exhausted.⁴

But we can expect worse to come since the IPCC predicts that without additional measures to combat climate change the global average surface temperature will rise a further 1.4 to 5.8°C depending upon the development scenario used. Such a projected rate of warming, they warn, “is much larger than the observed changes during the 20th century and is very likely to be without precedent during the last 10,000 years.”

The professional deniers

“There is no debate among any statures scientists of what is happening. The only debate is the rate at which it is happening.”

James McCarthy, Chair of the Advisory Committee on the Environment of the International Committee of Scientific Unions⁵

Faced with action to curb emissions the fossil fuel industry has conducted a war on reality in order to preserve their trillion dollar business. By doing so they have put the very future of the planet in the balance.

A handful of sceptics have been promoted by the carbon industries to try and present the climate science as uncertain and flawed. They have peddled scientifically spurious arguments and have often put forward economic objections to change. Ross Gelbspan of the *Boston Globe* has shown that the principal US sceptics such as Fred Singer, Patrick Michaels, Robert Balling and Richard Lindzen have been bank rolled by fossil fuel interests.⁶ But these scientists and their argu-

ments are not taken seriously by the climate scientists that lead the field.

One of the tactics of the sceptics was to play up the uncertainties in IPCC reports. Scientists are by nature cautious in their assessments and areas of uncertainty that were expressed in the earliest IPCC reports have been replaced, as the science has improved, with more firmly expressed statements. But as Ross Gelbspan noted: “Uncertainty cuts both ways [...] Our scientific knowledge, in other words, may even be lagging behind nature.

The momentum of globally disrupting climate change may be further advanced than earth science, with its areas of uncertainty, is currently able to prove.” This was the case with the ozone hole. When atmospheric measurements of ozone were finally made, the results were much worse than anything the modelling had predicted.⁷

International action

So what action has been taken at an international level and is it enough?

The warning signal of IPCC's first report in 1990 was enough to spur the international community into action. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was signed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and came into force in March 1994. It established the objective of stabilising atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at levels that would avoid “dangerous anthropogenic [i.e. human] interference with global climate.” Significantly, it recognised that scientific uncertainty must not be used to avoid precautionary action and that industrial nations—with the greatest historical contribution to climate change—should take the lead in addressing the problem.⁸

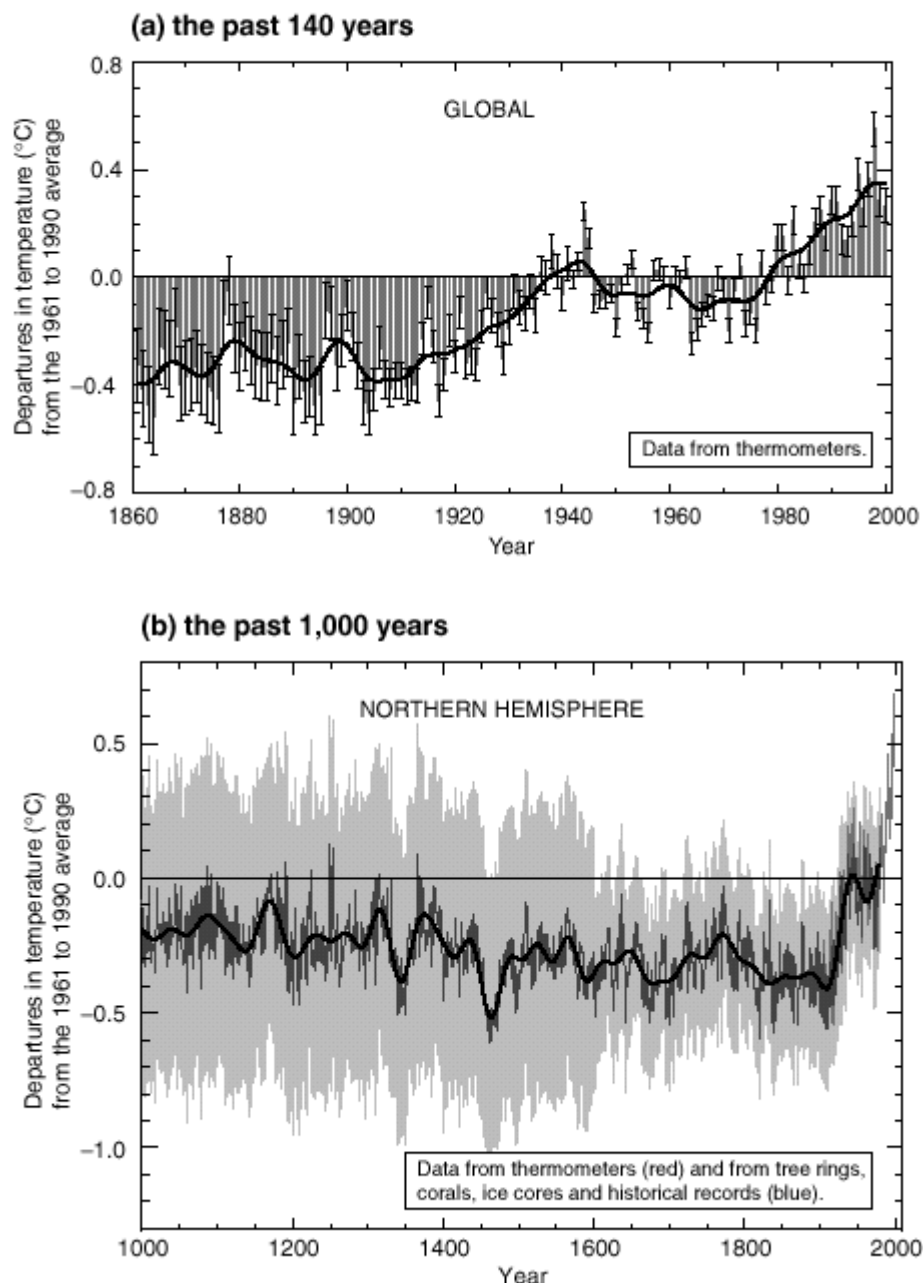
In 1995 however, the signatories to the UNFCCC concluded its commitments were inadequate and launched talks on a legally binding protocol. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol commits industrialised countries to an overall reduction in emissions of 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2010. The US committed itself to a 7% cut and the EU 8%. On announcing the agreement, the Chair of the negotiating session, Raul Estrada claimed that “the overall target of 5.2% is 30% below business as usual [...] This we can celebrate.”⁹

However, Kyoto's target of an overall 5.2% reduction was much less than the 15% originally argued for by the European Union or the 20% that the Alliance of Small Island States wanted to see. The withdrawal of the US—representing 36.1% of industrialised countries' greenhouse gas emissions in 1990—from the treaty in 2001 means that the overall figure of 5.2% reduction is no longer relevant. Furthermore the inclusion of ‘flexibility mechanisms’¹⁰ (successfully pushed for by the US with Japan, Australia and Canada), weaken the potential for reductions still further, since they effectively provide get-out clauses for any country who fails to meet their targets. In effect the Protocol now allows for an increase on 1990 levels which perhaps even go beyond business-as-usual projections.¹¹

Illustrations by:
Paul Bommer



Variations of the Earth's surface temperature for:



After the US pulled out of Kyoto in March 2001, 178 nations finalised many of the protocol's key rules in Bonn in July 2001. Many compromises were made to keep countries on board. Canada and Japan who formerly sided with the US's negotiating position have now ratified the Protocol, though Australia—another key US ally—has not. As soon as Russia has ratified the Protocol—which it has stated its intention to do—it will become law.¹²

In terms of emissions reductions, eleven years of international negotiations have achieved disappointingly little. Whilst acknowledging that the current agreement is "totally inadequate", NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace argue that it nevertheless provides "a sound legal architecture" upon which to build future reductions.¹³

UK Government

On the face of it the UK government has a relatively good record regards climate change. It accepts the science; has a programme of action to deal with it; lobbied along with the EU at climate negotiations for strict targets; by setting itself a voluntary target of 20% it has gone further than its original Kyoto commitment of 12% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 level by 2010; it now has a white paper on Energy which proposes a reduction of 60% of CO₂ emissions by 2050.

Dig a little deeper however and it emerges that the bulk of the UK's CO₂ emission reductions to date have been as a result of an economically driven switch in emphasis away from coal towards gas in electricity generating stations. The government's existing programme of measures designed to deliver its emissions reductions¹⁴ has been criticised for being inadequate. A report by the government's Sustainable Development Commission reached the conclusion that although the UK's Kyoto target would be met, "without further measures, the UK will fall well short of the

Government's goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20% of 1990 levels by 2010."¹⁵ Published earlier this year The White Paper¹⁶ contains many encouraging signs taking on many of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) in its report 'Energy: The Changing Climate'.¹⁷ According to the SDC it "goes a long way to filling the gaps identified in the Sustainable Development Commission's recent audit of the existing Climate Change Programme."¹⁸ Its main guiding consideration is that: "Significant damaging climate change is an environmental limit that should not be breached. We need to keep the UK on a path to 60% cuts in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050." It also recognises that: "If we do not begin now, more dramatic, disruptive and expensive change will be needed later." On the international level it declares: "A concerted international effort is needed. We will continue to work with other countries to establish a consensus around the need for change and for firm commitments to this ambition [...] We want the world's developed economies to cut emissions of greenhouse gases by 60% by around 2050."

Highlighting the importance of energy efficiency and renewable energy, nuclear power was put on hold as an option. The government has already announced (January 2000) an aim that renewable sources of energy will supply 10% of UK electricity by 2010 and now aims to double that by 2020.

Interest groups are still picking over the White Paper and their responses to it. Friends of the Earth's cautiously optimistic response is characteristic: "For the first time it seems that climate change has been placed at the heart of energy policy and this has to be congratulated. We are however concerned that the government has got a long way to go to deliver the policies and measures that will ensure the vision outlined in the White Paper is met."¹⁹

The White Paper includes a promise of an extra £60M for the development of renewable energy supplies in addition to the £38M extra announced in the 2002 spending review. Much greater amounts are needed to kick start the renewable industry in the way the government suggests. (Compare this amount for example to the chancellor's £3B reserves to pay for the war on Iraq and its £7B bail out of nuclear energy²⁰).

The Science and Technology Select Committee issued a scathing condemnation of the White Paper as "a document full of sentiments with few practical policy proposals that give us any confidence that its targets (and aspirations) can be met." It argues for a massive increase in investment in renewable energy technologies funded by a Carbon and Renewable Energy Tax (Science & Technology Select Committee, Fourth Report "Towards a Non-Carbon Economy: Research, Development and Demonstration", 3/4/3).

Most worrying from the UK's point of view is that any gains in CO₂ savings at home have been far outstripped by emissions it has helped create abroad. Since Labour came to power the Export Credit Guarantee Department has put \$1B into financing eleven coal-fired stations in the developing world. BBC2's Newsnight programme calculated that for every tonne of CO₂ emissions the government had saved at home, three tonnes had been produced abroad.²¹

The Problem with the US

The funding and promotion of sceptics in the US has been but one prong of a campaign fought by the fossil fuel industry to confuse the public, play up the economic implications of the Kyoto protocol, make it politically unacceptable to introduce a carbon tax or cuts in emissions and ultimately impede and disrupt the international negotiations.

ExxonMobil and others have pumped millions of dollars into think tanks and lobby groups (including the Global Climate Coalition, George C Marshall Institute, American Petroleum Institute and Competitive Enterprise Institute) and conducted high profile media campaigns and direct lobbying to massage the public, legislative and business communities in the US.²²

And the campaign has seen some considerable successes. In 1995 Republican congress member Robert Walker successfully argued for cuts in funding of climate change science programmes (although these were subsequently partly reinstated)²³; and in 1997 Congress passed a key resolution recommending that the US not sign an international climate agreement unless it included new commitments for developing countries.²⁴ The fossil fuel lobby's persistent work inside the international negotiations to bring about the weak agreement that we are left with today has been well documented.²⁵

Today, the fossil fuel industry no longer needs a lobby—it effectively became the government when Bush appointed a cabinet with a majority of its members having ties to oil and gas corporations. Since Bush came to power his administration has pulled out of Kyoto (March 2001), unveiled an alternative to Kyoto consisting entirely of voluntary measures by business (February 2002), launched an energy strategy that promotes a massive increase in fossil fuels (May 2001)²⁶ effected the removal of Dr Robert Watson from the chair of the IPCC (April 2002), dismissed a report written by its own Environmental Protection Agency confirming the science of climate change (June 2002), snubbed the Johannesburg Earth Summit by sending Colin Powell instead of George Bush (September 2002) and now launched a war for oil in Iraq in the face of overwhelming international opposition and against international law (March 2003).²⁷

With just 4% of the world's population using a quarter of the world's energy, the US remains the largest stumbling block to effective action to counter climate change. But perhaps the tide is turning. In January 2000 at the World Economic Forum, a vote amongst hundreds of chief executives put climate change as the number one issue of concern to business in the future and some predict that international diplomatic pressure and increasing domestic pressure may yet force the US to re-engage with the Kyoto process.

The ultimate gamble

The impacts of climate change are already catastrophic: extreme weather events are commonplace and will continue to increase. The most worrying characteristic of the climate system is the danger posed by 'feedbacks'. Once set in motion these have the effect of accelerating the rate of warming. Although each of the IPCC's assessments have contained warnings about such feedbacks The Ecologist's science editor, Peter Bunyard, believes that the IPCC has underestimated the role of these processes by leaving them out of its modelling. New climate modelling by Peter Cox at the Meteorological Office's Hadley Centre suggests that if no further action is taken to curb greenhouse gas emissions then within the next fifty years we will reach a threshold beyond which climate will start accelerating irreversibly and out of control.²⁸ This threshold occurs when the Amazon rainforests start to turn from a 'sink' (buffering the effects of climate change by absorbing excess atmospheric CO₂) to a 'source' (releasing CO₂ back into the atmosphere through an increase in forest fires).

In Cox's modelling this occurs when levels of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere reach 550ppmv and according to the RCEP this level

should be considered an unbreachable upper limit. The world is not currently on track to stay within this threshold. In order to be so, cuts of 60% in industrialised countries' CO₂ emissions from 1990 levels by 2050 would be needed.²⁹ To achieve this will require radical changes. Both the UK government and the EU are saying that they want to adopt these targets and promote them at an international level. How they will achieve this and secure the participation of the US and limit the weakening role of flexible mechanisms remains to be seen.

Up until now, action at intergovernmental level has been characterised by an attitude of 'How little can we get away with?' But increasingly there is a realisation that the economic imperative alone requires a fast pace of change. We now know that the longer we wait the more painful, difficult, drastic and financially costly the changes will be.

Ways forward

The gravity of the climate situation means that we can't just wait around to see whether or not governments and big business get their act together (though we need to put pressure on them to ensure they do). We need to start now to take action at every level we can. Beyond the obvious things like registering for electricity from renewable sources (all it takes is a phone call and it can be cheaper)³⁰, considering modes of transport and fuels³¹, cutting down on international flights, ensuring our homes are properly insulated, using energy saving light bulbs, etc. we should be raising awareness and encouraging action with friends and relations and at the workplace.

There is also good potential for getting local government to take action. Five hundred local governments representing 8% of global emissions have signed up to a programme of voluntary action to address their emissions. The Cities for Climate Protection campaign requires participants to monitor and reduce their emissions with many adopting a target of an 8% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2005 or 2010.³² The Local Agenda 21 Initiative provides an interface with your council through which they can be encouraged to sign up to the CCP plan.³³ Alternatively, you may have a local Friends of the Earth group who are active and could be effective in this way.

In London, Ken Livingstone has issued a bold 'Draft Energy Strategy' which lays out a broad programme of action and shows many of the ways in which local councils can play a major role in encouraging the use of energy efficiency, renewable energy and combined heat and power plants through the planning system.³⁴

A key lever of change in today's society is the economic one. *The Ecologist* has suggested raising awareness amongst fund managers of the risk to investments from climate change and encouraging disinvestment in fossil fuels.³⁵ Such action was the source of the success of the campaign to stop the Illisu Dam and the organisers of the offensive have written a report which shares their experiences.³⁶ Individual shareholders of oil companies and campaigns are an important pressure point and campaigns against new oil developments such as the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline³⁷ should be supported. Development banks and export credit agencies need to be pressurised to stop funding the development of fossil fuel electricity plants and start funding renewable ones.³⁸ *The Ecologist* discusses the option of bringing crippling legal actions against fossil fuel companies for their knowing role in causing the impacts of climate change, similar to the recent successful actions against the tobacco industry.

There are limitless things that can be done. 'Stormy Weather—101 Solutions to Global Climate Change' by Guy Dauncey and Patrick Mazza³⁹ makes

constructive suggestions for action at every level from the individual to the intergovernmental, and the UK Rising Tide group brainstormed fifty ideas for direct action.⁴⁰ The battle for the Earth's climate is the single most important issue facing the world today and one way or another we need to make sure that it is not one that is lost.

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22. Exxon's Weapons of Mass Deception—The Assessment of Greenpeace International, www.greenpeace.org.uk/MultimediaFiles/Live/FullReport/5292.pdf
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31. Biofuels offer amazing potential see Fill 'er up Boyo by Jim White, *The Guardian* 20/1/3 and www.northwales.org.uk/bio-power/links.htm
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Lunch With The Chairman

Why was Richard Perle meeting with Adnan Khashoggi?

Seymour M. Hersh

Pavel Büchler,
untitled, 1995;
medium,
collage

At the peak of his deal-making activities, in the nineteen-seventies, the Saudi-born businessman Adnan Khashoggi brokered billions of dollars in arms and aircraft sales for the Saudi royal family, earning hundreds of millions in commissions and fees. Though never convicted of wrongdoing, he was repeatedly involved in disputes with federal prosecutors and with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and in recent years he has been in litigation in Thailand and Los Angeles, among other places, concerning allegations of stock manipulation and fraud. During the Reagan Administration, Khashoggi was one of the middlemen between Oliver North, in the White House, and the mullahs in Iran in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal. Khashoggi subsequently claimed that he lost ten million dollars that he had put up to obtain embargoed weapons for Iran which were to be bartered (with Presidential approval) for American hostages. The scandals of those times seemed to feed off each other: a congressional investigation revealed that Khashoggi had borrowed much of the money for the weapons from the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (B.C.C.I.), whose collapse, in 1991, defrauded thousands of depositors and led to years of inquiry and litigation.

Khashoggi is still brokering. In January of this year, he arranged a private lunch, in France, to bring together Harb Saleh al-Zuhair, a Saudi industrialist whose family fortune includes extensive holdings in construction, electronics, and engineering companies throughout the Middle East, and Richard N. Perle, the chairman of the Defense Policy Board, who is one of the most outspoken and influential American advocates of war with Iraq.

The Defense Policy Board is a Defense Department advisory group composed primarily of highly respected former government officials, retired military officers, and academics. Its members, who serve without pay, include former national-security advisers, Secretaries of Defense, and heads of the C.I.A. The board meets several times a year at the Pentagon to review and assess the country's strategic defense policies.

Perle is also a managing partner in a venture-capital company called Trireme Partners L.P., which was registered in November, 2001, in Delaware. Trireme's main business, according to a two-page letter that one of its representatives sent to Khashoggi last November, is to invest in companies dealing in technology, goods, and services that are of value to homeland security and defense. The letter argued that the fear of terrorism would increase the demand for such products in Europe and in countries like Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

The letter mentioned the firm's government connections prominently: "Three of Trireme's Management Group members currently advise the U.S. Secretary of Defense by serving on the U.S. Defense Policy Board, and one of Trireme's principals, Richard Perle, is chairman of that Board." The two other policy-board members associated with Trireme are Henry Kissinger, the former



Secretary of State (who is, in fact, only a member of Trireme's advisory group and is not involved in its management), and Gerald Hillman, an investor and a close business associate of Perle's who handles matters in Trireme's New York office. The letter said that forty-five million dollars had already been raised, including twenty million dollars from Boeing; the purpose, clearly, was to attract more investors, such as Khashoggi and Zuhair.

Perle served as a foreign-policy adviser in George W. Bush's Presidential campaign—he had been an Assistant Secretary of Defense under Ronald Reagan—but he chose not to take a senior position in the Administration. In mid-2001, however, he accepted an offer from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to chair the Defense Policy Board, a then obscure group that had been created by the Defense Department in 1985. Its members (there are around thirty of them) may be outside the government, but they have access to classified information and to senior policymakers, and give advice not only on strategic policy but also on such matters as weapons procurement. Most of the board's proceedings are confidential.

As chairman of the board, Perle is considered to be a special government employee and therefore subject to a federal Code of Conduct. Those rules bar a special employee from participating in an official capacity in any matter in which he has a financial interest. "One of the general rules is that you don't take advantage of your federal position to help yourself financially in any way," a former government attorney who helped formulate the Code of Conduct told me. The point, the attorney added, is to "protect government processes from actual or apparent conflicts."

Advisory groups like the Defense Policy Board enable knowledgeable people outside government to bring their skills and expertise to bear, in confidence, on key policy issues. Because such experts are often tied to the defense industry, however, there are inevitable conflicts. One board member

told me that most members are active in finance and business, and on at least one occasion a member has left a meeting when a military or an intelligence product in which he has an active interest has come under discussion.

Four members of the Defense Policy Board told me that the board, which met most recently on February 27th and 28th, had not been informed of Perle's involvement in Trireme. One board member, upon being told of Trireme and Perle's meeting with Khashoggi, exclaimed, "Oh, get out of here. He's the chairman! If you had a story about me setting up a company for homeland security, and I've put people on the board with whom I'm doing that business, I'd be had"—a reference to Gerald Hillman, who had almost no senior policy or military experience in government before being offered a post on the policy board. "Seems to me this is at the edge of or off the ethical charts. I think it would stink to high heaven."

Hillman, a former McKinsey consultant, stunned at least one board member at the February meeting when he raised questions about the validity of Iraq's existing oil contracts. "Hillman said the old contracts are bad news; he said we should kick out the Russians and the French," the board member told me. "This was a serious conversation. We'd become the brokers. Then we'd be selling futures in the Iraqi oil company. I said to myself, 'Oh, man. Don't go down that road.'" Hillman denies making such statements at the meeting.

Larry Noble, the executive director of the Washington-based Center for Responsive Politics, a nonprofit research organization, said of Perle's Trireme involvement, "It's not illegal, but it presents an appearance of a conflict. It's enough to raise questions about the advice he's giving to the Pentagon and why people in business are dealing with him." Noble added, "The question is whether he's trading off his advisory-committee relationship. If it's a selling point for the firm he's involved with, that means he's a closer—the guy you bring in who doesn't have to talk about money, but he's the reason you're doing the deal."

Perle's association with Trireme was not his first exposure to the link between high finance and high-level politics. He was born in New York City, graduated from the University of Southern California in 1964, and spent a decade in Senate-staff jobs before leaving government in 1980, to work for a military-consulting firm. The next year, he was back in government, as Assistant Secretary of Defense. In 1983, he was the subject of a *New York Times* investigation into an allegation that he recommended that the Army buy weapons from an Israeli company from whose owners he had, two years earlier, accepted a fifty-thousand-dollar fee. Perle later acknowledged that he had accepted the fee, but vigorously denied any wrongdoing. He had not recused himself in the matter, he explained, because the fee was for work he had done before he took the Defense Department job. He added, "The ultimate issue, of course, was a question of procurement, and I am not a procurement officer." He was never officially accused of

any ethical violations in the matter. Perle served in the Pentagon until 1987 and then became deeply involved in the lobbying and business worlds. Among other corporate commitments, he now serves as a director of a company doing business with the federal government: the Autonomy Corporation, a British firm that recently won a major federal contract in homeland security. When I asked him about that contract, Perle told me that there was no possible conflict, because the contract was obtained through competitive bidding, and “I never talked to anybody about it.”

Under Perle’s leadership, the policy board has become increasingly influential. He has used it as a bully pulpit, from which to advocate the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the use of pre-emptive military action to combat terrorism. Perle had many allies for this approach, such as Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, but there was intense resistance throughout the bureaucracy—most notably at the State



Department. Pre-emption has since emerged as the overriding idea behind the Administration’s foreign policy. One former high-level intelligence official spoke with awe of Perle’s ability to “radically change government policy” even though he is a private citizen. “It’s an impressive achievement that an outsider can have so much influence, and has even been given an institutional base for his influence.”

Perle’s authority in the Bush Administration is buttressed by close association, politically and personally, with many important Administration figures, including Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy, who is the Pentagon’s third-ranking civilian official. In 1989, Feith created International Advisors Incorporated, a lobbying firm whose main client was the government of Turkey. The firm retained Perle as an adviser between 1989 and 1994. Feith got his current position, according to a former high-level Defense Department official, only after Perle personally intervened with Rumsfeld, who was skeptical about him. Feith was directly involved in the strategic planning and conduct of the military operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan; he now runs various aspects of the planning of the Iraqi war and its aftermath. He and Perle share the same views on many foreign-policy issues. Both have been calling for Saddam Hussein’s removal for years, long before September 11th. They also worked together, in 1996, to prepare a list of policy initiatives for Benjamin Netanyahu, shortly after his election as the Israeli Prime Minister. The suggestions included working toward regime change in Iraq. Feith and Perle were energetic supporters of Ahmad Chalabi, the controversial leader of the anti-Saddam Iraqi National Congress, and have struggled with officials at the State Department and the C.I.A. about the future of Iraq.

Perle has also been an outspoken critic of the Saudi government, and Americans who are in its

pay. He has often publicly rebuked former American government officials who are connected to research centers and foundations that are funded by the Saudis, and told the *National Review* last summer, “I think it’s a disgrace. They’re the people who appear on television, they write op-ed pieces. The Saudis are a major source of the problem we face with terrorism. That would be far more obvious to people if it weren’t for this community of former diplomats effectively working for this foreign government.” In August, the Saudi government was dismayed when the *Washington Post* revealed that the Defense Policy Board had received a briefing on July 10th from a Rand Corporation analyst named Laurent Murawiec, who depicted Saudi Arabia as an enemy of the United States, and recommended that the Bush Administration give the Saudi government an ultimatum to stop backing terrorism or face seizure of its financial assets in the United States and its oil fields. Murawiec, it was later found, is a former editor of the *Executive Intelligence Review*, a magazine controlled by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the perennial Presidential candidate, conspiracy theorist, and felon. According to *Time*, it was Perle himself who had invited Murawiec to make his presentation.

Perle’s hostility to the politics of the Saudi government did not stop him from meeting with potential Saudi investors for Trireme. Khashoggi and Zuhair told me that they understood that one of Trireme’s objectives was to seek the help of influential Saudis to win homeland-security contracts with the Saudi royal family for the businesses it financed. The profits for such contracts could be substantial. Saudi Arabia has spent nearly a billion dollars to survey and demarcate its eight-hundred- and-fifty-mile border with Yemen, and the second stage of that process will require billions more. Trireme apparently turned to Adnan Khashoggi for help.

Last month, I spoke with Khashoggi, who is sixty-seven and is recovering from open-heart surgery, at his penthouse apartment, overlooking the Mediterranean in Cannes. “I was the intermediary,” he said. According to Khashoggi, he was first approached by a Trireme official named Christopher Harriman. Khashoggi said that Harriman, an American businessman whom he knew from his jet-set days, when both men were fixtures on the European social scene, sent him the Trireme pitch letter. (Harriman has not answered my calls.) Khashoggi explained that before Christmas he and Harb Zuhair, the Saudi industrialist, had met with Harriman and Gerald Hillman in Paris and had discussed the possibility of a large investment in Trireme.

Zuhair was interested in more than the financial side; he also wanted to share his views on war and peace with someone who had influence with the Bush Administration. Though a Saudi, he had been born in Iraq, and he hoped that a negotiated, “step by step” solution could be found to avoid war. Zuhair recalls telling Harriman and Hillman, “If we have peace, it would be easy to raise a hundred million. We will bring development to the region.” Zuhair’s hope, Khashoggi told me, was to combine opportunities for peace with opportunities for investment. According to Khashoggi, Hillman and Harriman said that such a meeting could be arranged. Perle emerged, by virtue of his position on the policy board, as a natural catch; he was “the hook,” Khashoggi said, for obtaining the investment from Zuhair. Khashoggi said that he agreed to try to assemble potential investors for a private lunch with Perle.

The lunch took place on January 3rd at a seaside restaurant in Marseilles. (Perle has a vacation home in the South of France.) Those who attended the lunch differ about its purpose. According to both Khashoggi and Zuhair, there were two items on the agenda. The first was to give Zuhair a chance to propose a peaceful alternative to war with Iraq; Khashoggi said that he and Perle knew that such an alternative was far-fetched, but Zuhair had recently returned from a visit to Baghdad, and was eager to talk about it. The second, more important item, according to Khashoggi and Zuhair, was to pave the way for Zuhair to put

together a group of ten Saudi businessmen who would invest ten million dollars each in Trireme.

“It was normal for us to see Perle,” Khashoggi told me. “We in the Middle East are accustomed to politicians who use their offices for whatever business they want. I organized the lunch for the purpose of Harb Zuhair to put his language to Perle. Perle politely listened, and the lunch was over.” Zuhair, in a telephone conversation with me, recalled that Perle had made it clear at the lunch that “he was above the money. He said he was more involved in politics, and the business is through the company”—Trireme. Perle, throughout the lunch, “stuck to his idea that ‘we have to get rid of Saddam.’” Zuhair said. As of early March, to the knowledge of Zuhair, no Saudi money had yet been invested in Trireme.

In my first telephone conversation with Gerald Hillman, in mid-February, before I knew of the involvement of Khashoggi and Zuhair, he assured me that Trireme had “nothing to do” with the



Saudis. “I don’t know what you can do with them,” he said. “What we saw on September 11th was a grotesque manifestation of their ideology. Americans believe that the Saudis are supporting terrorism. We have no investment from them, or with them.” (Last week, he acknowledged that he had met with Khashoggi and Zuhair, but said that the meeting had been arranged by Harriman and that he hadn’t known that Zuhair would be there.) Perle, he insisted in February, “is not a financial creature. He doesn’t have any desire for financial gain.”

Perle, in a series of telephone interviews, acknowledged that he had met with two Saudis at the lunch in Marseilles, but he did not divulge their identities. (At that time, I still didn’t know who they were.) “There were two Saudis there,” he said. “But there was no discussion of Trireme. It was never mentioned and never discussed.” He firmly stated, “The lunch was not about money. It just would never have occurred to me to discuss investments, given the circumstances.” Perle added that one of the Saudis had information that Saddam was ready to surrender. “His message was a plea to negotiate with Saddam.”

When I asked Perle whether the Saudi businessmen at the lunch were being considered as possible investors in Trireme, he replied, “I don’t want Saudis as such, but the fund is open to any investor, and our European partners said that, through investment banks, they had had Saudis as investors.” Both Perle and Hillman stated categorically that there were currently no Saudi investments.

Khashoggi professes to be amused by the activities of Perle and Hillman as members of the policy board. As Khashoggi saw it, Trireme’s business potential depended on a war in Iraq taking place. “If there is no war,” he told me, “why is there a need for security? If there is a war, of course, billions of dollars will have to be spent.” He commented, “You Americans blind yourself with your

high integrity and your democratic morality against peddling influence, but they *were* peddling influence.”

When Perle’s lunch with Khashoggi and Zuhair, and his connection to Trireme, became known to a few ranking members of the Saudi royal family, they reacted with anger and astonishment. The meeting in Marseilles left Perle, one of the kingdom’s most vehement critics, exposed to a ferocious counterattack.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who has served as the Saudi Ambassador to the United States for twenty years, told me that he had got wind of Perle’s involvement with Trireme and the lunch in Marseilles. Bandar, who is in his early fifties, is a prominent member of the royal family (his father is the defense minister). He said that he was told that the contacts between Perle and Trireme and the Saudis were purely business, on all sides. After the 1991 Gulf War, Bandar told me, Perle had been involved in an unsuccessful attempt to sell security systems to the Saudi government, “and this company does security systems.” (Perle confirmed that he had been on the board of a company that attempted to make such a sale but said he was not directly involved in the project.)

“There is a split personality to Perle,” Bandar said. “Here he is, on the one hand, trying to make a hundred-million-dollar deal, and, on the other hand, there were elements of the appearance of blackmail—‘If we get in business, he’ll back off on Saudi Arabia’—as I have been informed by participants in the meeting.”

As for Perle’s meeting with Khashoggi and Zuhair, and the assertion that its purpose was to discuss politics, Bandar said, “There has to be deniability, and a cover story—a possible peace initiative in Iraq—is needed. I believe the Iraqi events are irrelevant. A business meeting took place.”

Zuhair, however, was apparently convinced that, thanks to his discussions with Trireme, he would have a chance to enter into a serious discussion with Perle about peace. A few days after the meeting in Paris, Hillman had sent Khashoggi a twelve-point memorandum, dated December 26, 2002, setting the conditions that Iraq would have to meet. “It is my belief,” the memorandum stated, “that if the United States obtained the following results it would not go to war against Iraq.” Saddam would have to admit that “Iraq has developed, and possesses, weapons of mass destruction.” He then would be allowed to resign and leave Iraq immediately, with his sons and some of his ministers.

Hillman sent Khashoggi a second memorandum a week later, the day before the lunch with Perle in Marseilles. “Following our recent discussions,” it said, “we have been thinking about an immediate test to ascertain that Iraq is sincere in its desire to surrender.” Five more steps were outlined, and an ambitious final request was made: that Khashoggi and Zuhair arrange a meeting with Prince Nawaf Abdul Aziz, the Saudi intelligence chief, “so that we can assist in Washington.”

Both Khashoggi and Zuhair were skeptical of the memorandums. Zuhair found them “absurd,” and Khashoggi told me that he thought they were amusing, and almost silly. “This was their thinking?” he recalled asking himself. “There was nothing to react to. While Harb was lobbying for Iraq, they were lobbying for Perle.”

In my initial conversation with Hillman, he said, “Richard had nothing to do with the writing of those letters. I informed him of it afterward, and he never said one word, even after I sent them to him. I thought my ideas were pretty clear, but I didn’t think Saddam would resign and I didn’t think he’d go into exile. I’m positive Richard does not believe that any of those things would

happen.” Hillman said that he had drafted the memorandums with the help of his daughter, a college student. Perle, for his part, told me, “I didn’t write them and didn’t supply any content to them. I didn’t know about them until after they were drafted.” The views set forth in the memorandums were, indeed, very different from those held by Perle, who has said publicly that Saddam will leave office only if he is forced out, and from those of his fellow hard-liners in the Bush Administration. Given Perle’s importance in American decision-making, and the risks of relying on a deal-maker with Adnan Khashoggi’s history, questions remain about Hillman’s drafting of such an amateurish peace proposal for Zuhair. Prince Bandar’s assertion—that the talk of peace was merely a pretext for some hard selling—is difficult to dismiss.

Hillman’s proposals, meanwhile, took on an unlikely life of their own. A month after the lunch, the proposals made their way to *Al Hayat*, a Saudi-owned newspaper published in London. If Perle had ever intended to dissociate himself from them, he did not succeed. The newspaper, in a dispatch headlined “Washington offers to avert war in return for an international agreement to exile saddam,” characterized Hillman’s memorandums as “American” doc-

uments and said that the new proposals bore Perle’s imprimatur. The paper said that Perle and others had attended a series of “secret meetings” in an effort to avoid the pending war with Iraq, and “a scenario was discussed whereby Saddam Hussein would personally admit that his country was attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction and he would agree to stop trying to acquire these weapons while he awaits exile.”

A few days later, the Beirut daily *Al Safir* published Arabic translations of the memorandums themselves, attributing them to Richard Perle. The proposals were said to have been submitted by Perle, and to “outline Washington’s future visions of Iraq.” Perle’s lunch with two Saudi businessmen was now elevated by *Al Safir* to a series of “recent American-Saudi negotiations” in which “the American side was represented by Richard Perle.” The newspaper added, “Publishing these documents is important because they shed light on the story of how war could have been avoided.” The documents, of course, did nothing of the kind.

When Perle was asked whether his dealings with Trireme might present the appearance of a conflict of interest, he said that anyone who saw such a conflict would be thinking “maliciously.” But Perle, in crisscrossing between the public and the private sectors, has put himself in a difficult position—one not uncommon to public men. He is credited with being the intellectual force behind a war that not everyone wants and that many suspect, however unfairly, of being driven by American business interests. There is no question that Perle believes that removing Saddam from power is the right thing to do. At the same time, he has set up a company that may gain from a war. In doing so, he has given ammunition not only to the Saudis but to his other ideological opponents as well.

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?030317fa_fact
Issue of 2003-03-17, Posted 2003-03-10

Coda

Writer Terrorises US War Businessman

Following the publication of this article in New Yorker magazine, Richard Perle, then still chairman of the Pentagon’s private Defense Policy Board, called journalist Seymour Hersh a ‘terrorist’ on CNN and threatened to sue him in the UK.

CNN transcript: <http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0303/09/le.00.html>
‘Put Up or Shut Up’: <http://64.176.94.191/article2241.htm>

Conflicts of Interest

On Monday, 24th March Rep. John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat, asked the Pentagon’s inspector general to probe Perle’s work as a paid adviser to bankrupt telecommunications company Global Crossing Ltd. and his guidance on investment opportunities resulting from the Iraq conflict.

On the Wednesday, Perle submitted his resignation as Chairman of the Pentagon’s Defense Policy Board to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, stating: “As I cannot quickly or easily quell criticism of me based on errors of fact concerning my activities, the least I can do under these circumstances is to ask you to accept my resignation as chairman of the Defense Policy Board.”

Rumsfeld accepted Perle’s resignation as chairman but, incredibly, asked that he remain a member of the board and continue as a leading advisor to the Defense Secretary.



Adnan Khashoggi



Richard Perle



Donald Rumsfeld

Invasion of the Kiddyfiddlers

Mick Wilson

It is arguably one of the hard-won achievements of the women's movement to have placed child sexual abuse, especially incestuous rape, on the political, legal and media agenda (Bell, 1993, p. 154). However, not unlike other achievements of the women's movement, it has been an ambiguous success. The making over of child sexual abuse into a question of paedophilia is an uneasy translation at best. Guy Hocquenhem has argued: "These new arguments are essentially about childhood, that is to say, about the exploitation of popular sentiment and its spontaneous horror of anything that links sex with the child."¹

Recently, the question of systematic and collusively obscured sexual abuse of minors has become a central media theme in both Europe and North America. Importantly, the emergence of this media-spectacle has been related to the coming to maturity and thus coming to voice of the victims of such abuse. (Just as significant, however, is the fact that the media have not always been willing to address such themes.) In tandem with the spectre of organisationally protected 'paedophile priests', another media-enabled spectre of social-sexual panic has emerged: the 'paedophile-at-large' or the 'paedophile-in-the-community.' Zygmunt Bauman, the social theorist, in his book *In Search of Politics* introduces a discussion of the loss of the possibility of a meaningful politics by citing a spontaneous public protest in response to precisely this spectre of the paedophile-at-large. Bauman retells the story of Sidney Cooke, a paedophile who had been released from prison and returned home. Home, in this case, was Yeovil, in England's West Country. These protests are described as highly charged emotional outpourings from ordinary people: ordinary people who took to the streets, and gathered outside the local police station where it was believed that Cooke was in hiding. Bauman argues that what is at stake in this protest is what seems to be the only space

left where spontaneous public action and collective political involvement is available to the citizenry. According to Bauman, the powerlessness felt by these people is overcome for a short period when a sense of community, shared belonging, and shared outrage can be expressed powerfully and publicly.

Bauman invokes the theme of *moral panic* as a way of explaining what is at stake in these protests. Moral panic is a sociological construct developed by British academics in the 1960s to address a media-facilitated fear of such perceived societal threats as the emergence of youth subcultures. Stanley Cohen in his (1972) *Folk Devils & Moral Panics* provides a broad outline:

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates... Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself. (Cohen, 1972, p.9)

This construct has been criticised, not least as a consequence of it passing into greater and non-specialised currency. Pointing to the weaknesses of the concept Simon Watney has argued that:

To begin with, [moral panic] may be employed to characterise all conflicts in the public domain where scape-goating takes place. It cannot, however,

discriminate between either different orders or degrees of moral panic. Nor can it explain why certain types of events are especially privileged in this way. Above all, it lacks any capacity to explain the endless 'overhead' narrative of such phenomena, as one 'panic' gives way to another, or one anxiety is displaced across different 'panics'. Thus one moral panic may have a relatively limited frame of reference, whilst another is heavily over-determined, just as a whole range of panics may share a single core meaning whilst others operate in tandem to construct a larger overall meaning [...] the theory of moral panics makes it extremely difficult to compare press hysteria and government inaction, which may well turn out to be closely related. (Watney, 1987, p. 41)

Accepting the limited power of analyses of moral panic, it is nonetheless interesting to note that the paedophile scare is arguably a classic example of moral panic, and one that is subject to several renewals over the last three decades. Recognising the paedophile narrative as part of a panic response strongly suggests then that it is serving a function of displacement. Thus Bauman and others will argue that the core meanings at play here do not reside in the ostensible content of the stories told and retold. Rather, it is a question of serving some other need. Essentially this proposes a functional reading of the panic as a mechanism for disavowing a broader set of intractable social and political problems by allowing for the symbolic acting out of a proxy anxiety in a way that is amenable to some potential resolution. Such resolution is usually dependent on attaching blame to a localisable, if not proximate, cause. Thus Bauman sees the clutch of panicked people of Yeovil, protesting the presence of an alien in their midst, as a reflex of the felt loss of a public sphere and of a participative politics. However, it may be that these situations are more complex than is allowed by positing a simple opposition between surface content (paedophile

as threat of imminent harm to children) and actual function (reclaim a space of politics / disavow its loss). The need for a more nuanced reading of these panic responses is particularly suggested by the recent upsurge in narratives of child-sex offences which involve celebrities.

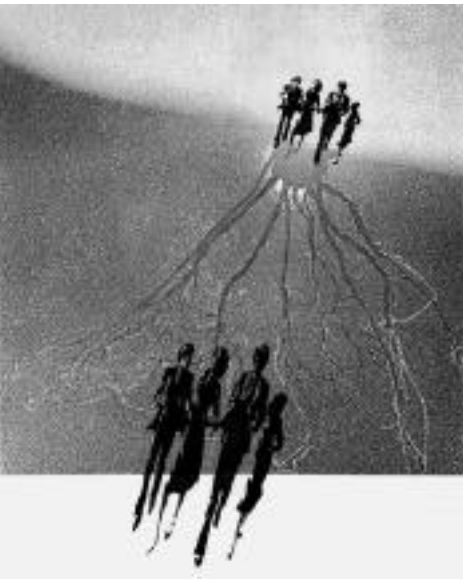
These recent narratives provide a further twist on this narrative of perversity and violence with the emergence of the celebrity paedophile in the British and to a lesser extent in the Irish media. Such cases as the Gary Glitter conviction, the Tim Allen conviction (husband of a famous Irish TV chef), the Jonathan King prosecution, the Pete Townshend story and more recently the false accusation of Matthew Kelly are indicative of an emergent trend in the media which forges a relationship between celebrity and child-sex perversity. (It may be that there is a genealogy of these recent narratives to be found in the earlier history of Hollywood and the notorious crimes of stars such as Fatty Arbuckle.)

However, it is not just conventional celebrity that is at issue here: it's not simply about stars, it's primarily a question of media visibility. When the two Soham children were abducted and murdered in the late summer of 2002, the unfolding media coverage culminated in the revelation that the police spokesperson (who had anchored much of the TV coverage) had been named in an FBI report on UK-based, internet child pornography viewers. As has happened many times before, a public image of civic and moral probity and a private 'truth' of perversity collided. This collision took place in the, arguably already *pornographic*, context of a daily news narrative of trauma. (A trauma that was made over into soap opera by a news industry apparently starved of other hot content during the August holiday period.) The extra charge of sensation generated by this case was the proximity of the compromised police officer to a massively exploited story of child-murder.

Media exposure becomes, in these cases, an integral aspect of the narrative of paedophilia: the paedophile is in a sense already famous and becomes infamous, is already exposed in the media and is then subsequently further exposed, *outed* as a pervert.

Central to this renewed currency of paedophile stories is the trope of 'child pornography on the internet' and the organised networks of child abuse. Certain cases in the US and in Belgium were given international media prominence in the 1990s and thus established a very strong relationship between the internet, consumption of child pornographic imagery and organised networks of child abduction, trade and sexual abuse. In 1996 the FBI established its *Innocent Images* programme which addresses child porn on the internet. This programme has garnered international media coverage because of the exchange of information about consumers of child pornography with other governments and police forces. Thus child porn has become the object of international police collaboration, similar to earlier initiatives to collaborate internationally around drugs trafficking and terrorism. This is indicative of the perceived scale of the threat.

In one famous exposé of the threat of the internet as a medium of paedophile activity a group of North American Police Chiefs were presented in a seminar with an FBI agent posing as a twelve-year-old girl in an online chat room. The 'girl's' cover story was that she was away from school with the flu. Very quickly, she became the target of enquiries from ostensibly older men who made enquiries about her sex activities and requested pictures of her. One interlocutor sent a digital image of his genitals. In other versions of this story the interlocutor arranges a meeting with the child under the pretence of being a same-age-group peer only to emerge as a middle-aged predator. A key trope in the discussion of organised networked paedophiles is the description of their ability to engage with the child in the child's domestic sphere, since the internet-enabled computer is in the bedroom or sitting room, and is



thus a gateway into the home, a gateway that can often be unpoliced and unprotected. It is important to note that these scenarios of adults recruiting younger children and teenagers online, are cited as examples of child pornography. The argument thus made is that there is a smooth and uninterrupted continuum between the consumption of imagery and the actualising of predatory sexual assaults on children. The smooth continuity of this spectrum is guaranteed by the figure of the paedophile: only a paedophile would look at such images, and a paedophile by definition is one who actively sexually assaults children. (There are interesting parallels with earlier concerns for the deleterious effects of the cinema on children, especially as these pertained to perceived sexual threats to the child in the darkened space of the cinema, and the presumed inherent promiscuity of the cinematic image itself (See Hansen, 1990).)

It is noteworthy also that these recent narratives of paedophilia have become, not just part of 'news' and 'documentary' programmes, but also the stuff of explicitly 'entertainment' TV production (accepting that these distinctions are slight anyway). Thus the US TV series *Law & Order Special Victims Unit* in its 2002 season featured a preponderance of storylines centred on child-sex offenders. (This series signals its remit as a considered commentary on the moral and legal dilemmas of contemporary US society by referencing specific topical social issues in the storyline and providing context setting dialogue. Thus it echoes and reinforces the broader currency of the paedophile narrative in the media.) Interestingly these storylines generally entail murder scenarios as the logical extension of the child-sex offence. The abuse stories are generally situated in the context of non-biological family relations or of state care and welfare initiatives. In one instance the victims are non-US citizens imported as part of an organised trade in children-for-sex, in another instance the victims are children from dysfunctional families where the primary carer is a drug addict or otherwise incapacitated. There is in one storyline a specific address to the North American Boy Love Association, an advocacy group for paedophiles. This organisation is cited in the course of a standard context-setting aside by one character. The effect of this device is to reinforce the topicality of the theme and underline the broad social urgency of the issue.

These narratives of child sexual abuse, whether in the news or in detective shows, refer ultimately, and however heavily mediated, to actual events in the world. What they describe does in some critical sense take place. On the other hand these are not the only stories that might be told about child sexuality or child sex assaults. These narratives clearly service a moral panic reflex. These stories narrate child sexual violence by forging a series of linkages between child sexual assault and several key themes: the individualised, pathological type 'the paedophile'; the extra-familial networks of these otherwise remote, isolated types (enclaves of clerics or networks of tech-savvy online pred-

tors); the pervasive threat, yet extraordinary nature of the pervert; the danger of new technologies (digital imaging, digital networks) as vehicles bringing these, otherwise externalised, threats into the home (the putatively safe place of childhood); the vulnerability of non-traditional family constructs. These stories tell us that child sexual assault is a pathology of *the contemporary, of modernity*. It should be remembered that when feminist authors began to produce narratives of sexual assault on children, among the key themes were the family, male authority, incest, the construction of femininity as child-like, and the collusive societal repression of these stories of abuse. For earlier feminist accounts child sexual abuse was thus a *pathology of patriarchy, of authority*.

Returning then to the moral panic interpretation, it appears that the paedophile scare is overdetermined. It is symbolically operating many and various anxieties but also displacing and obscuring other dilemmas. It obscures the simple fact that children are primarily vulnerable to sexual exploitation in their family homes at the hands of their parents, their carers, their siblings, their relatives and other figures of trust. It obscures the simple fact that children, internationally, are subject to all manner of chronic and fatal abuses, under systems that are collusively maintained by a whole host of international players. It displaces our profound ambivalence for this historically recent construct, the child, and does not allow us to ask why the child can be so sexually charged, for so many 'ordinary people'. It obscures that which is arguably the primary locus of most violence, of most sexual pain and dysfunction, the family. It services the recurrent anxieties that have traditionally emerged in the face of technological change. And indeed, as Bauman notes, it does seem to enable a fleeting sense of community, identity and belonging in the face of horror.

The paedophile scare appears to brook no dissenting positions, no hesitant critique or even anything that obliquely suggests that the whole spectrum (from internet imagery to child-murder) is not an absolute, integral and uniform evil. Indeed if the child-sex question was properly a question, a topic on which publicly reasoned exchange and dialogue could proceed, the moral panic would be punctured. It requires the quenching of all and any ambiguity, all and any scruple, so that an absolute and binding consensus may hold. It may be that this is the one point at which moral panic responses and some feminist accounts of child sex offences converge: there must be no confusion, the juxtaposition of sex and the child is always and everywhere monstrous. But of course historically children have not been listened to, or believed in respect of these matters, while adults have often been protected by family collusions and the support of other social structures, and so the fear of slippage is understandable. Ambiguity in these matters, it is believed, will accrue benefit only to offenders and predators.

Notes

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Solway’s Silver Bullet

Mike Small

“Unborn children of the region are being asked to pay the highest price, the integrity of their DNA.”¹

Ross B. Mirkarimi

A new kind of nuclear war is being waged. It’s already being fought in Scotland and the combatants are you and me. Our attackers are the Ministry of Defence, a force which has already poisoned its own soldiers and threatened the health of the civilian populations of the former Yugoslavia, Kuwait and Iraq.

Why is this happening? The threat comes from ‘the coalition’ of the perceived need to re-use uranium left-over from commercial production, and a military ‘need’ for a strengthened shell casing. The result is Depleted Uranium, nicknamed ‘the silver bullet’.

In 1996, the UN Subcommission on Human Rights classified Depleted Uranium (DU) ammunition as an indiscriminate ‘Weapon of Mass Destruction’, and a ‘Crime Against Humanity’. Grant Wakefield, of opposition group ‘The Fire Next Time’, says: “The use of DU, and the subsequent massive efforts to downplay its after-effects represents one of the most stupendous and outrageous lies ever told by Western governments.”

What is Depleted Uranium? DU is used to make projectiles which can penetrate armour, for example in anti-tank missiles. After penetration the DU forms a powder which is ‘pyrophoric’, burning to form a fine dust of uranium oxides. DU is a by-product from the production of enriched fuel for nuclear reactors and weapons, and used to manufacture shells, bullets and protective armour of tanks. This excess uranium, composed mainly of the uranium isotope U-238, is called “depleted” because it has a lower than normal content of the fissionable material. But it has one very “excellent” property—it is extremely dense and capable of penetrating heavily armoured vehicles.

DU spontaneously burns on impact, creating tiny aerosolized particles less than five microns in diameter, small enough to be inhaled. At least 70% of the uranium in these weapons is released in this form on impact, and these tiny particles travel long distances when airborne. Today’s precision bombing headline is tomorrow’s contaminated landscape.

Poisoning The Populations of Kuwait and Iraq

A minimum of 940,000 rounds of DU were fired by US forces during the Gulf ‘war’. An estimated 300 metric tonnes of DU material was deposited over vast tracts of land, primarily in Southern Iraq. A letter was sent to the Royal UK Ordnance on April 21st 1991 by Paddy Bartholomew, Business Development Manager of AEA Technology, the trading name for the UK Atomic Energy Authority. Enclosed was a ‘threat paper’, marked ‘UK restricted’ which set out the true nature of the contamination:

“US tanks fired 5,000 rounds, US aircraft many tens of thousands of rounds, and UK tanks a small number of DU rounds. The tank ammunition alone will amount to greater than 50,000 lbs. of DU. [...] If the tank inventory of the DU was inhaled, the latest International Committee of Radiological Protection risk factor calculates 500,000 potential deaths. The DU will spread around the battlefield and target vehicles in various sizes and quantities. [...] It would be unwise for people to stay close to large quantities of DU for long periods and this would obviously be of concern to the local population if they collect this heavy metal and keep it.”



30 mm DU Bullet

The people of Basra have just received their second dose of missiles tipped with depleted uranium in 12 years. They’re still reeling from the first lot.

Scott Taylor, the editor of *Esprit de Corps* magazine, writes: “For the past 10 years the medical staff at the Basra Pediatric Hospital have compiled a very disturbing photographic record which catalogues thousands of patients born with ‘congenital anomalies’.” Due to its strategic location—just north of Kuwait—Basra was one of the most heavily targeted Iraqi cities during the Coalition Forces’ aerial bombardment during what’s being called ‘Gulf War I’.

In the decade since Operation Desert Storm, the lethal legacy of that conflict continues unabated in the form of widespread cancer, an epidemic of renal disease and a tremendous increase in genetic birth defects. The collection of photographs which line the walls of the Basra Hospital “memorial gallery” are horrific: grotesque babies born with two heads, tiny infants with internal organs protruding through their chest cavities, numerous limbless children, and an alarming number of newborns who reached full term without developing any skin.

“To find similar congenital anomalies we have had to research the radioactive aftermaths of Hiroshima and Nagasaki”, said Dr. Khalid Al-Abidi, Iraq’s Deputy Minister of Health. But as the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium says: “The risks of Depleted Uranium are not only present during wars, or far-off conflicts, but affect us much closer to home, where the weapons are manufactured and tested.”

Scotland: Birthplace of The New Warfare

As depleted uranium shells rained down on Iraq, the Scottish people could take pride in the fact that the weaponry has been developed and tested in and around the Solway Firth for the past twenty years. We simply couldn’t have brought them this level of liberatory democracy if we hadn’t already tried it out at home.

Many thousands of DU tipped shells have been test-fired from the Dundrennan range, though the MoD insist that the environmental contamination caused by the shells is negligible as “they were fired into a cloth target”² and there was no known risk to public health.

This process, which sets up the Dumfries countryside and its local population as an open air medical experiment, was halted recently, ironically, because of restrictions over access to land due to foot and mouth disease. But now they’re testing again.

While the after-effects of depleted uranium are shrouded with expected secrecy, the bald facts are made plain in several key reports. A frank admis-

sion from the US in 1990 stated: “Short-term effects of high doses can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer.”³

But while the suspected connection between Gulf War Syndrome and DU has galvanised a movement to oppose this scientific experiment in America, it has been slow off the ground in Scotland. In the US, the Depleted Uranium Citizens’ Network began its work in 1992 and introduced itself to the public in March of 1993 with the release of a report entitled ‘Uranium Battlefields Home and Abroad’. This report was written by DU Network members, the Rural Alliance for Military Accountability, the Progressive Alliance for Community Empowerment, and Citizen Alert. The DU Network’s membership consists of people living near uranium enrichment plants and near facilities where DU munitions are made, former workers at those facilities, people living near where DU weapons are tested, and both Persian Gulf and Atomic veterans.

In Scotland there is little opposition. It’s difficult to tell why not. Maybe it’s the geography of Dundrennan. Certainly culpable are the failed Scottish Labour Party, the useless Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and the opportunistic Nationalist agenda that plays to a pro-military sub-agenda. Unfortunately, also true is that the softly-softly approach of Scotland’s Green MSP, the multi-coloured scarf-wearing Robin Harper, has been ineffective. Perhaps Kevin Dunion, in his new role as Scotland’s Secret’s Supremo, can uncover some of the truth about the military in Scotland? But the more likely reality is that we shall have to uncover the truth ourselves.

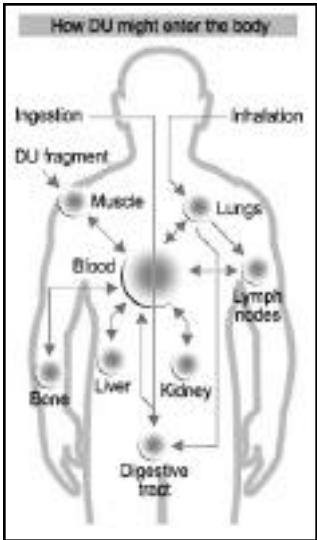
Elsewhere the anti-DU movement has grown out of disaffected soldiers’ own politicisation. Their legal and medical cases—and a growing realisation that they are the dispensable pawns of the military—have fuelled rather than quelled an investigative spirit that’s lacking in Scotland. In the US this has been enhanced by a radicalised veteran’s movement and a decade of enquiry into Gulf War Syndrome. Scotland wears its military history on its shoulder with pride. It’s part of some strange nostalgic affection with our violence. Scottish regiments, long bought by the British to wage wars abroad (be it Ireland or Iraq) carry this notion of romance with them through the centuries. So, the nationalists would rather bristle under regimental pride than look into the filthy secrets of experiments on the civilian population.

Like Dounreay, also left unanswered, unresolved and unwanted, the rural positioning of the Dundrennan Range suits the Generals and the career politicians busying themselves with the defence of the realm and the creation of micro-policy at Holyrood.

Manuel Pino, an environmental activist from the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico, sees links between the geography and the placement of radioactive military sites in the US: “In remote areas of the Navajo Reservation there are still over one thousand unreclaimed uranium pit mines open, filled with water, inviting children to swim



the Depleted Uranium Penetrator shell



and animals to drink.”

Uranium development on indigenous people's land parallels the history of the nuclear industry in the United States. When the race to build atomic weapons began in secrecy during World War II, nuclear weapons research had been established in New Mexico. Six Pueblo nations in northern New Mexico are within thirty miles of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, where the first atomic bomb was developed. The remote desert spot called Trinity, New Mexico, where on July 16, 1945, the first atomic bomb was tested, is within sixty miles of the Mescalero Apache Nation. The Grants Mineral Belt—which would ultimately become the largest uranium belt in the world—was located on or near the Navajo nation and Laguna and Acoma Pueblo lands.



Photographs: J.B.Russell, 'congenital anomalies' in Iraq following 'Gulf War I'.

It's said that the MoD were asked to identify a UK site for nuclear testing—Caithness. The only factor that stopped it was the levels of rainfall rather than the population.

Fighting Military Occupation in Puerto Rico

Since 1938, the US Navy has been acquiring land in Vieques by expropriation. The US Navy uses 75% of the Island's soil for war manoeuvres, and bomb storage. Not surprisingly, the Puerto Rican population of 9,000 have learnt effective methods to oppose their further colonisation.

Vieques' fishermen have been at the forefront of a courageous resistance to military occupation confronting warships at sea several times. In February of 1978, US admiral Robert Fanagan told the fishermen that they would not be allowed to fish during 3 weeks. NATO countries had planned an intensive military manoeuvre along all of Vieques' coastline. Carlo Zenún informed him that they would protest. "Imagine me, a Puerto Rican fisherman, telling a US Navy admiral that we're going to cause problems for them", he said. On February



6th, 1978, fed-up with the Navy's arrogance, the fishermen took a desperate gamble. Forty fishing boats 'invaded' waters where target practice with live ammunition was about to begin. They were successful in stalling the manoeuvres and awakening the support of the entire Puerto Rican nation. This activism at sea has won important victories for the people of Vieques during their struggle against the US Navy.

After a civilian, David Sanes Rodriguez, was killed by the navy on April 19th, 1999, a group of civilians gathered in the "accident" area to protest the bombardments. This show of outrage and civil disobedience was a frontal challenge to the US Navy's ill-gotten authority. On April 21st a group gathered at the place of the bombings, placed a large cross and named the area Mount David, in memory of Mr. Sanes. Mount David is peppered with live ammunition. In spite of this, many people organised protests behind the gates of the Navy's restricted areas. All these protests have successfully detained the bombings since Sanes' death. "I know that there is a great danger", said Pablo Connelly, one of the civilians that protested, "I know that the risks are great, but all the risks are worth it. I do this for my children and for the children of all Viequenses and I know that during the time that I remain here there is not going to fall a single bomb in Vieques."

On May 8th, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) established a second campsite in Playa Carrucho. The president of the party, Senator Ruben Berrios, vowed to stay in the campsite until either the Navy left or he was arrested. A scenario of confrontation was set. Once again, David faced Goliath eye to eye. Many other Encampments of Civil Disobedience were established over the course of that year in the target range. At the beginning of May 2000, there were about 14 of them with over one hundred people living permanently in such harsh conditions.

On Thursday, May 4, 2000, at 5:30am federal authorities began to arrest the people conducting Civil Disobedience in Vieques. This act was considered an offence of the US Government against the will of the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico, who took back their land for one full year to prevent the bombing and shelling of the Island.

History Of DU Testing In Scotland

Regular test-firing of DU shells started in 1980 at Eskmeals in Cumbria, and at the Ministry of Defence's firing range at Dundrennan, near Kirkcudbright in South-west Scotland in 1981. In June 1993 the MoD, answering a parliamentary question, in effect denied that there was any problem, there being "only very low levels of radioactivity" detected. But when radiation reports were made public in July (with some excisions) these revealed serious levels of contamination outside the controlled area at Eskmeals, and grass and soil samples at Kirkcudbright were "well above acceptable limits." The test-firings had resulted in the accumulation of radioactive waste at these sites. Currently 91 cubic metres at Eskmeals is estimated to rise to 468 cubic metres by 2030.

At Kirkcudbright there is considered to be no nuclear waste as DU shells are fired into the Solway Firth. All MoD efforts to retrieve them have failed.

At Kirkcudbright a misfiring on 13th

November 1989 involved a DU shell exploding into fragments on impact with a stone bank. This resulted in a local concentration of 1,692 mg/kg well exceeding the MoD's normal limit of 72 mg/kg and upper limit of 300 mg/kg. Presumably, in investigating this incident, military personnel



inspected the site of impact and were exposed to this concentration. Depending on wind and weather conditions, local populations in Britain may be exposed to unknown concentrations over prolonged periods.

So what is the present situation in Scotland? For SEPA's last statement on the issue you have to go back to 12th January 2001, which simply noted public concern and the MoD's inability to retrieve the shells. The MoD's monitoring has not shown elevated levels of uranium, nor has it found the specific DU 'signature'. However, if shells

cannot be retrieved it is impossible to demonstrate that the DU has dispersed and been absorbed into the normal background radiation.

In his statement to the House of Commons, the Minister for the Armed Forces, John Spellar MP, said: "The Environment Agency in England and Wales, and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency in Scotland also have oversight of the firing programme." In fact according to SEPA: "MoD activities are not subject to the Radioactive Substances Act so SEPA does not have control over these activities, nor do we undertake monitoring for depleted uranium. We are aware of the firing programme and, along with the local Council, see the results of the MoD's own monitoring. We also provide advice to the MoD."

It would be difficult to imagine how SEPA could be more discredited. With the politicians disinterested, and the statutory body dissolute, the public are left powerless, ignorant and contaminated. Drawing on the Vieques Libre movement in Puerto Rico and the American people's legal opposition to their own military, we need to build a national body which monitors military operations throughout Scotland, and a movement against the occupying force.

Depleted Uranium is not just another weapon in the terrorist state's arsenal; it defies all the protocol of international law. The fact that Britain and America have used DU weapons in the present and past conflicts shows them to be beyond redemption, and exposes the contempt they have for their own civilian population as well as those abroad.

Every opportunity should be raised to move to shut down the Dundrennan range and halt DU tests. As in Vieques, local fishermen can play a key role and unity should be made with the people of Northern England, Ireland and Dumfries and Galloway. It's degrading to remain quiescent in the face of such assault.

For an update on the campaign against military abuses in Scotland contact product2000@hotmail.com

Notes

- 1 Ross B. Mirkarimi, The Environmental and Human Health Impacts of the Gulf Region with Special Reference to Iraq. May 1992
- 2 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/1873534.stm>
- 3 From the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) report, included as Appendix D of AMMCOM's Kinetic Energy Penetrator Long Term Strategy Study, Danesi, July 1990.

Istanbul September/October 2002

A journey to understand why thousands of political prisoners were prepared to starve themselves to death in Turkish prisons

David Green

The moment you're born
they plant around you
mills that grind lies
lies to last you a lifetime

'A Sad State of Freedom', Nazim Hikmet

During twenty years of political activity I have come to the conclusion that if we are serious about radical and eventual change then we must do it where we are, at our base: the community we live in and our workplace. That means speaking out against the injustices and poverty around us.¹ For a long time I have criticised those who put all their energies into struggles in far off countries. I have viewed many as latter day missionaries and dismissed them as middle class do-gooders, finding causes in other people's struggles while failing to see the issues and struggles around them. For these personal reasons, it was with great reluctance that I became involved in the struggle against the F-type solitary confinement cells in Turkish prisons.

As an activist, initially I knew little about the situation in Turkey other than it being an extremely repressive country² and of the atrocious treatment of the Kurdish population.³ During the bombing of Belgrade I had developed a friendship with a Kurdish asylum seeker here in Liverpool, but due to language difficulties it was often difficult to comprehend his politics. He had managed to convey certain things, though: he had been tortured, (held over Istanbul Bridge by the police, amongst other things). Later, I understood he had been part of the Leftist struggle which included both Turks and Kurds fighting for self-determination for everyone.

On the morning of 19th December 2000 he arrived at my house, upset and angry, and asked if our group, 'People Not Profit', could help. Previously, he had told me about the hunger strikes in Turkish prisons against the forcing of political prisoners into the 'coffin cells' or isolation units, and that the prison guards continually attacked them seeking to quash their protest. This time though the Turkish state's actions were more extreme. In the cynically titled 'Life Saving Operation', 20 prisons were raided by state forces and the prisoners attacked. Hundreds had been injured and 30 political prisoners (6 women and 24 men) massacred through shootings, gassing and even by being set on fire. That afternoon people from our group and from the Turkish/Kurdish community protested in Liverpool city centre. We held placards and gave out leaflets to shoppers calling on them to protest by phoning and faxing the Turkish Government and Embassies. But even then, to me, an activist half my life, Turkey still seemed a long way away and someone trying to convey to me through basic English the shocking reality about what had happened in Turkey in the early hours of that morning did not have a shocking effect, largely because I could not comprehend the full horror of the situation.

"They suddenly opened fire and threw bombs. The barricade that they talk about was two wardrobes. Six women were burnt alive in the same dormitory in one night."

Ebru Dincer, survivor of December 19th attack who ended up with 3rd degree burns to face and body.

Following December 19th I heard the occasional story about the situation in Turkey and attempted to search the internet for information but there was little coverage in English, and then it was mainly sloganeering. Moreover, it was hard to see the human side of the story

or the people involved. And so the hunger strike continued, and it still seemed a long way away. Only when I began to meet more Turkish and Kurdish people arriving in Liverpool did it begin to sink in. You can often presume you are aware of certain political realities and ensuing struggles by reading about them, but actually understanding and really knowing is different; behind the slogans there are human beings, people with their own histories, their own pain and humiliations and their own spirit of resistance.

"But this kind of freedom
Is a sad affair under the stars"

Nazim Hikmet

I received a *Guardian* article (2/04/02) about the death of Meryem Altun, a young woman born in Turkey who had been a community worker in London, who, frustrated and angry at what was happening in Turkey, decided to join her comrades. She was arrested on her return to Turkey, immediately sent to prison and became the 50th woman to die in the hunger strike.

Soon after, I saw two excellent documentary films made by the Turkish film maker Metin Yegin, 'After' and 'Lifehouse'. We decided that to raise awareness of the hunger strikes we would develop a multi-media project using the poetry of Nazim Hikmet set to music⁴ and produce a film using images from life in Turkey and from the hunger strikers themselves. We wanted to avoid using slogans, clichés and terminology which people can't understand or relate too, and instead present a very human story. Over the following months we researched and developed the project, 'The Lemon Seed'⁵, which was presented to a local audience who were both shocked and moved by what they saw.

Today is Sunday
Today, for the first time
they took me out into the sun
and for the first time in my life
I looked at the sky
amazed that it was so far
and so blue
and so wide

'Today is Sunday', Nazim Hikmet

Researching 'The Lemon Seed' gave me a deeper understanding of the struggle. I read survivors' testimonies, searched through thousands of images, stories, interviews and much footage, looking for an overall understanding. I discovered horror, naked brutality and a viciousness inflicted by people, that I found difficult to understand. But I also discovered that those on the receiving end of this viciousness were not broken people, destroyed by the brutality of state officials, police and soldiers, or by months on hunger strikes; instead I found courageous people whose stories moved me to tears, who evoked inspiration through their tales, their humour and their great resilience. These people, in their hundreds, possibly thousands, labelled as 'terrorists' by a murderous state had suffered torture to the extreme, seen their close friends burnt and murdered, watched their loved ones die of starvation, yet the state could not destroy their spirit. I can only imagine this resilience. With all this in mind my Turkish friends suggested I visit Istanbul. A month later, camcorder in hand, I was on a plane flying there, still with my 'do-gooder' reservations.

A Turkish friend, who had travelled over a few days earlier, met me and over the next few days I experienced the warmth and generosity of her friends and family. I had yet to visit the supporters and the survivors of the hunger strike, a number of whom had now been released⁶ and had established a live-in project called the Lifehouse where they could support each other back to health.

You may proclaim that one must live
not as a tool, a number or a link
but as a human being —
then at once they handcuff your wrists.
You are free to be arrested, imprisoned
and even hanged

'A Sad State of Freedom', Nazim Hikmet

First I visited the *Bureau of the Alinteri* newspaper, a strong supporter of the hunger strikers. Istanbul is a massive place and it took two hours to get there. At the *Bureau*, to my surprise, I was met by six very friendly women, all between the ages of twenty and thirty, who ran the paper. We sat around in a circle, and my friend translated our conversations. All of the women were awaiting trial; they had all been accused of working on a 'communist' newspaper and were expecting a prison term. These women, though, not only took it all in their stride, but made jokes about it. The conversation was free and easy: they said there was very little else the Turkish state could do to the revolutionary movement, apart from killing them all. I was shown some artwork by an imprisoned comrade of theirs, and asked my opinion on whether I understood it, and what it said to me. I was shown around the office but most of their equipment had been confiscated by the police so they were running everything on two computers. They showed me their website and a site where their comrade was displaying his art work—in spite of the consequences. Throughout our conversations, despite our political differences, I was treated as an equal and they were genuinely interested in my opinion. The work these women were and are doing takes great courage, commitment and concern.

"Well after the December 19th massacre, we were dragged to the F-type cells. After we entered Tekirdag F-Type Prison, hundreds of Guards guards and soldiers attacked us. It was terrible; most of us had been on hunger strike. I can't even describe it, you wouldn't believe it. They tortured us, beat us, besides that they strip-searched us; some were raped with truncheons."

Mustafa Yasar

We were then to visit the Lifehouse, the self-help project for survivors of the hunger strike. Again, it took about two hours to get there across the urban sprawl and chaos of Istanbul. It was in an anonymous apartment building similar to all the others, with a grey door set in amongst a number of shops. We were greeted by two very friendly women, Hulya and Naile who welcomed us into the smoke filled parlour where there were about six people. Amongst them, Cafer was a tall, slim, quiet man whose co-ordination and memory had been affected by his 69 days on hunger strike in the prison struggle of 1996. He walked slowly to maintain balance, and his head continually bobbed too and fro. And Omer, whom I'd heard had been affected the most,

both physically and psychologically, was unable to maintain co-ordination and had to keep an up-to-date diary because he had lost his short term memory.

“I’d lived through 7 seven years of this, in 7 seven years you can experience all kinds of things, torture, both physical, psychological, and molestation.”

Hulya Turuk

After all the initial introductions of Who? What? Where? Why? everybody relaxed and there was an array of banter with people laughing. They told me they were used to visitors. A group of Italian doctors had just spent three weeks at the Lifehouse making a film about Wernicke-Korsokoff, a hardly known disease. Many of the survivors of the hunger strike were suffering from this disease and it had also been found in survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, partly caused, it’s believed, by severe vitamin deficiency.

I was not initially aware that almost everyone in the room had been on hunger strike. Most looked physically unaffected, but actually half of them were suffering from the symptoms of Wernicke-Korsokoff—a mixture of balance and memory loss. Mustafa Yasar—a small, stocky, friendly man in his 40s—asked me if I had been there before, he thought he remembered me from the previous day. This was a common problem of Wernicke-Korsokoff. After so long on hunger strike, the mind and the memory plays back on you during real time; images from the past appear before you and the present seems like the past. Mustafa had done over 250 days on hunger strike.⁷

“We tried everything to oppose the F-types, but after December 19th we had no choice. The only way we could resist was to offer up our bodies, we had nothing else.”

Hulya Turuk

“Three years my trial lasted. In 1999 I lived through the Ulucar massacre, 10 ten friends died there. Then I was forced into Burdur prison, in this operation they snapped my arms, and then six months later there was the December 19th attack.”

Baris

My friend left me alone at the Lifehouse when Baris, a former student at the Middle Eastern University arrived, as he was able to translate for me. Baris had been on hunger strike for 211 days, though showed no physical or mental signs of it. He was typical in many ways of the Turkish political situation. He had been arrested for being a member of an illegal organisation, the TIKB, and sentenced to 17 years in prison. He was found guilty in a court with no jury, served 6 six years before going on hunger strike, and then on the point of death was released for 6 six months, like many others. We spoke all day into the early morning and continued the next day well into the afternoon. I felt comfortable enough to ask him highly personal questions. He said he hated the term often used to describe the Turkish hunger strike, ‘The Death Fast’. It was a ‘life fast’ he said, a demand to live. The reason he stayed alive for so long was that he loved life so much. Baris, like the others, said the authorities had given him very little choice but to go on hunger strike—otherwise the isolation cells would kill them. When forced into the F-Type prisons they would not be able to mix and be with friends, and they would be at the mercy of the authorities and the prison guards. It took me to visit the Lifehouse and talk, for a long time, with the survivors themselves to really understand what the hunger strike was about. It was the ultimate or the final form of resistance when there was nothing left. It was either that or silence and death.

I discovered many things at the Lifehouse, the most obvious being that you cannot truly understand a situation from afar, and that it is difficult to take a word by word political analysis from one country and apply it to another. Turkey is culturally different in many ways to the UK, thus the people are also culturally different, there is much more emphasis on social rather than individual activities. When you apply these general facts to political prisoners, apart from their obvious fear of physical torture—which everybody in the Lifehouse had experienced; Mustafa also witnessed his friends tortured to death—their biggest fear was of being alone



Cafer in 1996 hunger strike.

and they saw isolation, followed by alienation as the most terrifying form of torture.

I left Baris asleep when I was leaving the Lifehouse. I knew he was worn out and wasn’t as well as he looked. I spent part of the afternoon with my friend and Omer, who apologised for his silence during my visit but I knew he could remember very little. We sat in his room while he read his diaries to us, reiterating that, although he was suffering from Wernicke-Korsokoff, he was not a child and was trying his best to do things independently. Metin, the doctor who seemed the more serious of the group, had explained to me why the Lifehouse was so important to the survivors. He talked about one hunger striker who arrived there in a bad state. He couldn’t walk and couldn’t remember who anyone was. But after a few months surrounded by friends, his health began to greatly improve. He then decided to visit his family who treated him like a helpless child and patronised him. Added to this he visited a doctor who told him he would never walk again and shouldn’t even try. “How does that make someone feel? We know Wernicke-Korsokoff is a neurological problem”, Metin explained, “and we know that with exercise he will walk again, but in that situation we had to start all over again.” Metin emphasised that very few people knew about the disease and that there was hardly any medical literature on it. He himself was suffering from it after being on hunger strike for 210 days. Nearly everyone at the Lifehouse had made massive progress, and this had been brought about by encouragement, self-belief and a certain amount of autonomy in a supportive atmosphere.

My love!
In your last letter you say,
“My head is aching
my heart is stunned”
“If they hang you
if I lose you,”
you say
“I cannot live”

‘Letter to My Wife’, Nazim Hikmet

As the day progressed the rota changed; a number of people left and others arrived. When Ozlem—a small, black-haired woman in her mid-twenties—left, I suggested she come to Liverpool sometime—she had told someone earlier that she always wanted to learn English. They all laughed, with Naile saying, “If only she could leave the country.”

I knew they were struggling financially to keep the Lifehouse going. Most of the people there were too ill to work, and probably couldn’t because of their legal restrictions. The movement that supported them was economically overwhelmed, and there was no way their families could keep them. Added to the rent, fuel and food was the expense of the B1 vitamin tablets the survivors needed to aid their recovery. We brought fundraising money over but knew that wouldn’t last long.

We caught a bus towards Taksin Square where the famous Saturday Mothers used to gather (the mothers of the disappeared) before they were brutally attacked and forced off the streets by the police. Did the Turkish regime think that people would suddenly forget that their loved ones had disappeared? Or would forget that they had a son or daughter beaten, tortured, raped, murdered or on hunger strike in prison? I thought of the ordinary people at the Lifehouse, who, because they had dared to question the tyrannical system under which they were living under, had found themselves in extraordinary circumstances. They were a strange mixture: Mustafa had been a textile worker who joined the union; Cafer had worked in a show factory; Hulya, a stu-

dent involved in a campaign for free education, not unlike the people in our group in Liverpool. I also realised how disconnected their struggle was from the political scene throughout the rest of Europe—in fact very few people knew about what had been happening in Turkey.

I was brought to research the Turkish prison struggle through reading about people, what their pain was and what was in their hearts and minds, not because of slogans. The major aim of this article is to present a testament of my experience of being involved in politics, relating that to the struggle for justice in Turkey and to the people I met there. And to my friend who accompanied me who shall remain nameless for her own safety. We have many commonalties and their struggle must also become our struggle. The one direct solidarity we can show is in revealing and distributing information on the truth of their struggle.

References

Nazim Hikmet, Selected Poems, 1967, Cape Editions.
If you would like to comment on this article contact: davidgreen@merseymail.com
If you would like to express or offer your support to the Lifehouse project contact: lifehouse_turkey@hotmail.com

Notes

1. I am of course talking from a country where we are not yet thrown into prison for expressing such opinions, though admittedly we now face many other isolatory measures, such as dismissal or exclusion.
2. Turkey was described by Amnesty International in 1998 as having the worst human rights record in the world.
3. Chomsky has pointed out that the real reason for NATO bombing Yugoslavia in 1999 was not what Milosevic and the Serbs were doing to the Kosovan Albanians, but rather, amongst other things, that they were potential opponents of the economic plans of the West. If NATO and the politicians driving them were really interested in stopping human rights abuses and opposing ethnic cleansing, then why didn’t they mention Turkey’s human rights atrocities against the Kurds, with some 15,000 people murdered and thousands of villages destroyed over a 15 year period? Of course, Turkey is not only a strategic member of NATO but is friendly to the economic plans of the West.
4. Nazim Hikmet was not only Turkey’s most celebrated poet but as a communist he spent a considerable time in prison for his political convictions.
5. The title ‘The Lemon Seed’ was based on a story told by the survivors of the December 19th prison attack. They hid lemon seeds in their clothing after spending hours being dragged through the mud before being thrown back into prison cells. They managed to scrape the mud off their clothes, potted it and grew lemon plants from the seeds.
6. In Turkey there is a law stating that when a prisoner is seriously ill they can be released so that their family can look after them. This law was used by lawyers representing the hunger strikers, getting many of them released for a six-month period. The government was also sensitive to the bad publicity it was receiving on account of so many hunger strikers dying.
7. In November, 1992, Remzi Basalak, Saban Budak and Mustafa Yasar were arrested by the police in Adana. Saban Budak was killed on the spot. A few hours later, Remzi Basalak and Mustafa Yasar were shown to the press, heavily tortured. Remzi Basalak told the journalists that he was tortured and he cursed the police. The press was immediately removed. Remzi Basalak was tortured again and murdered.

There was a trial against 14 officers at the First and Second Criminal Court in Ankara after Mustafa Yasar declared he could recognise the murderers of Remzi Basalak and said he wanted to testify as a witness. However, he was not allowed. The post-mortem reports state that Remzi Basalak “died of cerebral haemorrhage”. As in other trials, Saban Budak’s clothes were never found again. For appearances only, officers were put on patrol duty. But as always, the trial will end in acquittals.

Internationalism revisited or In praise of Internationalism

Benita Parry

Empire
Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri
Cambridge, MS: Harvard, 2000
ISBN 0674006712

Although proceeding from very particular theoretical premises, the Hardt/Negri thesis on the epochal shift from imperialism to the decentred and deterritorialized terrain of ‘Empire’¹ impinges on contemporary debates about globalization. Whether this is conceived as a break with capitalism’s pre-existing forms or an intensification of its inherent contradictions and conflicts, will decide the deductions made by theorists about prevailing modes and relations of production, the location and dissemination of power, the actual or potential oppositional energies of classes, and the sites, shapes and goals of revolutionary projects. On these issues the positions of *Empire* reiterate and countermand those advanced by both Marxist and postmodernist theorists, rendering the book’s variable perspectives consistent and discrepant with its declared ambitions as a manifesto of political insurrection

A decade ago Michael Sprinker had observed that with the demise of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of the socialist bloc, and the end of the heroic era of liberation struggles, there had been a retreat of traditional left intellectualism and the development of other intellectual formations situated on the left but disengaged from Marxism². Were Sprinker alive and writing now he would have had the pleasure of noting the many signs of Marxism’s return to intellectual life, and amongst the numerous glosses on *Empire* are those which consider whether a study that situates itself as preserving/transcending Marxism, can be received as part of this trend. Stephen Shapiro, for example while welcoming *Empire* for ‘inaugurating a long-overdue confrontation between contemporary strands of neo-Anarchist thought ... and a reconstituted Marxism’, has observed that by ‘refusing the geography of uneven development, Hardt and Negri’s work cannot align itself, in any meaningful sense, with Marx’s diagnosis on capitalism’s need to appropriate new zones of labour-power; the primitive accumulation that results in core/periphery differences’³. In a less forgiving critique, Tim Brennan, who traces the book’s conceptual provenance to the *autonomia* movements of the Italian far left, council communism, the theoreticism of Continental philosophy and nineteen-sixties counter-culturalism, maintains that this cognitive apparatus is translated into ‘a gathering together of positions that are substantively incompatible’, the ‘pattern of reverential borrowings from Marxism’ involving ‘simultaneously, its rejection and diminishment’⁴.

But if *Empire* is not recognizably Marxist in its methodology, eschewing as it does the necessity of confronting state power; neither is it post-Marxist since it has not relinquished economic and political explanations for cultural ones, or subordinated class, however radically this is redefined, to ethnicity, gender and sexuality, nor discarded class struggle, even if this is abstracted from its accustomed usage. Moreover the authors declare an idiosyncratically articulated allegiance to communism. In this, *Empire* remains outside of the current consensual ideology, retaining as it does a commitment to a revolutionary transformation that is *beyond* capitalism⁵. A mode suggesting an

*aufheben*⁶ rather than an abandonment of Marxism may predispose some on the left to give *Empire* a cordial reception, and I for one am able to sign up to much of the book’s recapitulation of capitalism’s historical development, its indignation at the system’s iniquities and its undimmed hope in an emancipatory politics. All the same there remain for me problems with a dizzying conceptual promiscuity induced by the heady cocktail of Marxist, autonomist and postmodern paradigms. In particular because the Deleuzian notion of lines or paths of flight, of flows and borderless continuums is used as a trope of thinking processes and invoked as a template of real world conditions, these disposals converge in an insouciant disregard of the actually existing circumstances in what the authors insist is a post-imperialist era. A mismatch between a retrospect resting on received Marxist narratives and delivered with sober mien, and the fantastical prospect on the present and future enunciated in an euphoric rhetoric, makes the reading of this book a lesson in the difference between intimations of a reasoned Utopia, and wish-fulfilment presented as imminent event.

As troubling are the consequences of transposing the localized theoretical heritage of the *autonomia* movement onto a world arena. Elsewhere Hardt had written that ‘Laboratory Italy refers no longer to a geographic location, but ... to a specific modality now available to all of us, of experimenting in revolution’; and having surveyed the economic and political shifts unique to western Europe, and more particularly as these were played out in workers’ struggles in Italy during the nineteen-seventies⁷, he goes on to insist that ‘Italian revolutionary thought ... can now be recognized as relevant to an increasingly wide portion of the globe in a new and important way’⁸. So insular a vision of spaces that once constituted the empires of Europe is, I suggest, contingent on the authors’ neglect of the heterogeneous socio-economic formations existing within capitalism’s global system, and it is salutary to contrast the indiscrimination of the fuzzy world-outlook pervading *Empire* with the close analyses of geographical terrains, institutional structures, modes of production and class forces undertaken by Marxist theorists in the colonized world when devising their own experiments in revolution.

There are moments when it could appear that it is an extravagance of style which distinguishes *Empire* from previous attempts to detect a radical rupture within capitalism’s forms, and in this sense the book has received proleptic replies. For some time now Neil Lazarus has argued against ‘discontinuist historico-philosophical assumptions’ and ‘endist’ logic, insisting that the intensification and reconfiguration of capitalist social relations do not represent a new era of capitalist development⁹. Also writing prior to the appearance of *Empire*, David Harvey had asked whether the quantitative changes that have occurred within capitalism’s global process did indeed constitute a qualitatively ‘new era of capitalist development’, to which self-posed question he initially gave a qualified ‘yes’, which was immediately countermanded by the assertion that because globalization entailed the profound and uneven temporal and geographical reorganization of capitalism, ‘there has not been any fundamental revolution in

Notes

- 1 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, MS: Harvard, 2000, pp. 49, 50
- 2 ‘The National Question: Said, Ahmad, Jameson’, *Public Culture*, 6:1, p. 3-29
- 3 Shapiro 2002: ‘*Mythologies of Autonomy: Capitalist Space and Left Institutionalality*’, unpublished paper.
- 4 ‘*The Empire’s New Clothes*’, to appear in Interventions.
- 5 For a brilliant inveighing against those who hold positions under the ‘spell of universal permanent capital’, see István Mészáros, *Beyond Capital: Towards a Theory of Transition*, London: The Merlin Press, 1995.
- 6 “Aufheben: (past tense: hob auf; past participle: aufgehoben; noun: Aufhebung). There is no adequate English equivalent to the German word Aufheben. In German it can mean “to pick up”, “to raise”, “to keep”, “to preserve”, but also “to end”, “to abolish”, “to annul”. Hegel exploited this duality of meaning to describe the dialectical process whereby a higher form of thought or being supersedes a lower form, while at the same time “preserving” its “moments of truth”. The proletariat’s revolutionary negation of capitalism, communism, is an instance of this dialectical expression of this movement in the method of critique developed by Marx.” *Aufheben*
<http://www.geocities.com/aufheben2/>
- 7 For a critique of the theoretical thinking of this epoch see ‘From *operaismo* to “autonomist Marxism”’ in *Aufheben*, No 11, 2003, pp. 24 – 40.
- 8 *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 1, 4. Since it is impossible to follow the arguments in *Empire* without some acquaintance with the concepts and esoteric vocabulary of the Italian extra-parliamentary left, Hardt’s explanatory introduction to *Radical Thought in Italy* is an invaluable guide to the book’s theoretical assumptions. Asserting that the axes of revolutionary thought within the Euro-American framework have now shifted from German philosophy, English economics and French politics to French philosophy, U.S. economics and Italian politics, Hardt claims that Italian revolutionary politics can serve as a model ‘for experimentation in new forms of political thinking that help us conceive a revolutionary practice in our times ... the experiments conducted in laboratory Italy are now experiments of our own future’ (p. 9).
- 9 See *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 41-51
- 10 Globalization in Question’, in *Rethinking Marxism*, Vol. 8, No 4, Winter 1995, pp. 1 –17, pp. 5, 12.
- 11 *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization: The Management of Contemporary Society*, London: Zed Books, 1997, p. 147. Writing about China, Chinese scholars have shown that ‘about 80% of the Chinese people live either at the bottom or the margins of society’, some 14% of the total available workforce or 100 million people are unemployed or pauperized, and the implementation of market-led modernization has issued in ‘a return to conditions common during the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth-century’—low wages, long hours, absence of safety regulations, frequent disastrous accidents. See He Qinglian, ‘China’s Listing Social Structure’, *New Left Review*, 5 Sept/Oct 2000, pp. 69-99, p. 85, 87; and Wang Hui, ‘Fire at the Castle Gate’, *New Left Review*, 6, Nov/Dec 2000, pp. 69-99
- 12 Amin defines this world market as dictated by the

the mode of production and its associated social relations'¹⁰.

This unevenness, according to Samir Amin, intensifies capitalist social relations on a world scale even though the South is now being differentiated between those peripheral societies that are undergoing industrialization (East Asia, Latin America, India and South East Asia) and those (Africa and parts of Arab world) which are not¹¹—the last including nation-states where in world terms the whole nation is the active and reserve army of labour. Amin goes on to observe that with the erosion of the great divide between industrialized centre and non-industrialized periphery, there has emerged 'new dimensions of polarization' defined by a country's capacity to compete in the world market¹², resulting in 'a new hierarchy, more inequality than ever before, in the distribution of income on a world scale, subordination of the industries of the peripheries and reducing them to the role of subcontracting' (*Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, pp. 3-5)¹³. Thus although an enthusiast of *Empire* has claimed that Hardt and Negri 'do insist on the unevenness of capitalist development'¹⁴, it would seem that the 'rhizomatic method' which they favour, together with their passion for decentring, contrive to inhibit adequate attention to the structural hierarchy and polarization endemic to contemporary capitalism¹⁵. And where inequalities persist, so do borders remain in place and so are flows of populations, cultures and socialities distorted.

At stake in the argument advanced by Hardt and Negri is the question of whether autonomous struggles that have dispensed with class organization and party formations can mobilize an effective 'counter-globalization'. To doubt the efficacy of spontaneity is not to dismiss the significance of the proliferating 'New Social Movements'¹⁶, or what John Holloway, who is sympathetic towards autonomist or *operaismo* / workerist theories, has called the lived struggles against invisibility, 'the hidden world of insubordination' and anti-power—even if, as he concedes, these remain in the absence of class consciousness and interconnectedness, harmless to capital¹⁷. Nor is it to minimize the importance of anti-capitalist protest directed at the regulation rather than the transcendence of the global system. Such movements command the critical support of Ray Kiely who in refusing a 'reform-revolution' dichotomy, advocates a position 'somewhere between on the one hand Leninist vanguardism, where struggles are subordinated to the will of the Party that holds the "correct knowledge", and on the other direct action and autonomist perspectives that uncritically celebrate struggle without attempting to analyse the efficacy and progressiveness of such struggles'¹⁸.

But this too, I suggest, rests on a false dichotomy since it misconstrues the Marxist conception of a dialectical interaction between revolutionary spontaneity, or the voluntary and active agency of the masses, and a central vanguard party. As Ernest Mandel has written, it was understood by the theorists of the Russian Revolution that the leading role of the party 'had to be continuously fought for politically and won democratically; the majority of the workers have to be convinced, they have to give their consent ... the party is an accompaniment to the self-activity of the masses'¹⁹. In Gramsci's exposition the relationship is posited as an institutional dialogue with the subaltern classes where the work of the party must be structured by 'the formation of a national-popular collective will, of which the modern Prince [Gramsci's coded word for the Communist Party] is at one and the same time the organiser and the active, operative expression'²⁰. Rejecting the twin errors of intellectuals who either display contempt for spontaneous struggles or extol spontaneity as a political method, Gramsci endorsed as exemplary those movements where the leadership set out to mediate, organize, educate and direct spontaneity rather than to lead it: 'This unity between "spontaneity" and "conscious leadership" or "discipline" is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes, in so far as this is mass politics and not merely an adventure by groups claiming to represent the masses' ('The Modern Prince', p. 198).

We could also consider Georg Lukács' gloss on Lenin's concept of party organization: 'the group of professional revolutionaries does not for a moment have the task of either "making" the revolution or—by their own independent, bold actions—of sweeping the inactive masses along to confront them with a revolutionary *fait accompli*. Lenin's concept of party organization presupposes the fact—the actuality—of the revolution (italics in original)²¹. Thus, Lukács maintains, when Lenin urged that the role of revolutionary intellectuals was to bring socialist consciousness to the workers' movement 'from the outside', this should be understood as providing theoretical knowledge about the regime as a totality. The relevance of this perception surely persists, for without understanding capitalism as a system, spontaneous struggles are limited in their capacity to challenge its institutions, threaten it globally, or offer the prospect of a different social order.

How then does *Empire* conceive a project of 'counter-globalization' that in ideology, composition and method is distinct from the traditions which envisaged nation-based proletarian movements joined within a socialist international? Post-Marxists appear to be agreed that proletarian class analysis is exhausted, received notions of class agency and organization anachronistic, and the nation-state no longer an adequate framework for opposition to contemporary capitalism. As a consequence all declare internationalism obsolescent. One such instance is a blunt rejection: 'Proletarian and socialist internationalism ... have become embarrassments to contemporary socialists ... if the old internationalism is dead, then the internationalisms of the new social movements (women, ecology, peace, human rights) are alive and kicking'²². A less blatant case for 'rethinking ... the older Marxist notion of internationalism' within the current global restructuring and heterogeneity of contemporary capitalism, has been made by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd who challenge 'class antagonism as the exclusive site of contradiction', and fault those movements which prescribe political and state-oriented goals, proposing instead the equal importance of cultural, feminist and anti-racial struggles 'that do not privilege the nation and are not necessarily defined by class consciousness'²³. But the most elaborate obituary of proletarian internationalism is to be found in *Empire*.

Proceeding from the supposition that the supranational operations of capitalism have rendered an international proletarian formation inconceivable, Hardt and Negri are able to pay their retrospective respects to proletarian internationalism for having 'constructed a paradoxical and powerful political machine that pushed against the boundaries and hierarchies of the nation-state', while pronouncing that its time 'is over' (p. 49). For, according to the authors, 'the restructuring and global expansion of capitalist production' has in 'the absence of a recognition of a common enemy against which struggles are directed' (p. 55) caused the death of class solidarity and given birth to a new proletariat which 'is not a new industrial working class' but 'the general concept that defines all those whose labor is exploited by capital, the entire cooperating multitude' (p. 402, italics in original). If the categories of 'a new proletariat' and 'the multitude' here appear to be conflated, they are elsewhere differentiated. Concerning the new proletariat, the authors relegate industrial, artisanal and agrarian labour on the grounds that 'the figure of immaterial labour power (involved in communication, cooperation, and the production and reproduction of affects) occupies an increasingly central position in both the schema of capitalist production and the composition of the proletariat' (p. 53)²⁴. This paradigm, dubious even when restricted in its application to Western Europe and North America²⁵—where manual labour, wherever its operations are located, remains the ground on which communicative and affective labour can exist and flourish²⁶—is offered as a universal model and therefore relevant to those parts of the world subject to combined and uneven development where pre-nascent and 'classical' capitalist conditions remain prevalent.



monopolies he names as: technological, financial control of world markets; access to planet's natural resources, media and communication monopolies, monopolies over weapons of mass destruction.

13 According to the World Outlook Report of the IMF which appeared in 2000 'in the recent decades, nearly one fifth of world's population have regressed. This is arguably ... one of the greatest economic failures of the 20th century'. In the same year the World Bank reported in frustration: 'One legacy of socialism is that most people continue to believe the State has a fundamental role in promoting development and providing social services'. Cited in Greg Palast, *The Best Democracy Can Buy*, London: Polity Press, 2002, p. 50, 47. We can also consider the case made by the sociologist Michael Mann who while acknowledging that 'North' and 'South' are not strictly geographical designations, finds that the North continues to widen inequalities, the most important divide being what he calls an 'ostracizing imperialism', whereby 'one part of the world both avoids and dominates the economy of the other', since 'most of the world's poorest countries are not being significantly integrated into transnational capitalism', being considered 'as too risky for investment and trade'. 'Globalization and September 11', in *New Left Review*, 12 Nov/Dec 2001, pp 51-72, p. 53-4.

14 Peter Green, 'The Passage from Imperialism to Empire: A Commentary on *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri', in *Historical Materialism*, Vol 10:1, 2002, pp. 29 – 77, p. 43

15 In reviewing George Soros's book *On Globalization*, Joseph E. Stiglitz, the economist who was fired by the World Bank for his measured criticism of its policies, mused: 'The world of international finance and economics is astonishing. What would seem to be basic, and even obvious, principles, often seem contradicted. One might have thought that money would flow from rich to the poor countries; but year after year exactly the opposite occurs.' *New York Review of Books*, May 23 2002, p 24-26.

16 See Leslie Sklair, 'Social Movements and Global Capitalism', in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed Fredrick Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. For some statements from the horses' mouths on the new social movements and notions of a new internationalism, see Naomi Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons', *New Left Review*, 9, May/June 2001, pp. 81-89, John Sellars, 'The Ruckus Society', *New Left Review*, 10, July/August. 2001, pp. 71-85, José Bové, 'A Farmers' International?' *New Left Review*, 12, Nov/Dec, 2001, pp 89-109 and David Graeber, 'For a New Anarchism', *New Left Review*, 13, Jan/Feb 2002, pp 61-73, all in Series entitled 'Movements'.

17 *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 157.

18 'Actually Existing Globalisation, Deglobalisation, and the Political Economy of Anticapitalist Protest', in *Historical Materialism*, Vol 10:1, 2002, pp 93-121, footnote 95, pp 115-6.

19 *Trotsky as Alternative*, trans Gus Fagan, London: Verso. 1995, pp. 80-1.

20 'The Modern Prince', in Selections from the *Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed and trans. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, p 133.

21 *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought* (1924), London: New Left Books, 1967, p. 26.

Having redefined the composition of the proletariat, the authors then implicitly differentiate this constituency from ‘the multitude’—the dispossessed masses who while certainly exploited by capital, are certainly not coterminous with those ‘involved in communication, cooperation, and the production and reproduction of affects’. This introduces a category that could appear to be pre- or non-Marxist—a subset akin to populist notions of the people or the poor, classifications from which class self-understanding is absent—but which claims to supersede Marxism. As used by Hardt and Negri, the multitude, now exceeding its original Italian connotation²⁷, signifies all who by engaging in fragmented and dispersed forms of resistance are the actual and potential agents of global revolution. It is they who moved by deterritorializing desires had dismantled imperialism’s structures and called empire into being; and it is they who by ‘[p]roducing and reproducing autonomously’, construct both ‘a new ontological reality’ (p. 395) and a new historical moment. Where the international cycle of struggles ‘based on the communication and translation of the common desire of labor in revolt seem[s] no longer to exist’, and communicable solidarity in struggle is impossible, it is the multitude who inaugurate local, specific and immediate events which ‘blocked from travelling horizontally in the form of a cycle ... are forced to leap vertically and touch immediately on the global level’ (pp. 54-5). Thus through spontaneous struggles without programmes, strategies and party, the always mobile multitude is destined to construct ‘a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges’ (p. xv).

That this assertion is repeated does not mean that it is substantiated or even elucidated (see pp. 55, 58, 60, 61): consider the labyrinthine enunciation of an elusive case premised on a perception of globalization as a depthless body invisibly undermined by the microscopic and poisonous circulation of disaffection: because ‘Empire presents a superficial world, the virtual centers of which

can be accessed immediately from any point across the surface’, the multitudes, by ‘focusing their own powers, concentrating their own powers in a tense and compact coil’, initiate ‘serpentine struggles’ which ‘slither silently across [the] superficial imperial landscape ... [and] strike directly at the highest articulation of imperial order’ (p. 58; the order of phrasing has been rearranged). Although conceding that political alternatives to empire do not yet exist, Hardt and Negri confidently proclaim, and in the present tense, that ‘[d]esertion and exodus are a powerful form of class struggle within and against imperial post-modernity’ (p. 213)²⁸. And they go on to prefigure a luminous future: ‘A new nomad horde, a new race of barbarians, will arise to invade or evacuate Empire’, a species which will destroy ‘with an affirmative violence and trace new paths of life through their own material existence’ (pp. 213, 215). Gone is the political and economic battle of organized revolutionary subjects against the state power vested in a ruling class. And given Hardt and Negri’s modest proposals for the Right to a Social Wage and Global Citizenship, gone is a real politics of insurrection²⁹.

The sheer academicism of the Hardt/Negri pronouncements on appropriate forms of struggle against what they refuse to name as imperialism, emerges when two articles, one by Hardt, the other by an activist in the Brazilian landless movement, are juxtaposed. In his report of the World Social Forum at Port Alegre in Brazil, Hardt identifies the political differences cutting across the forum: the anti-globalization position which ‘poses neoliberalism as the primary analytical category’ and looks to ‘national sovereignties, even if linked by international solidarity ... to limit and regulate the forces of capitalist globalization’; and that position which ‘is more clearly posed against capital itself ... opposes any national solutions and seeks instead a democratic globalization’³⁰. For Hardt both stances identify the same sources of the crisis; however each implies a different form

22 Peter Waterman, ‘Internationalism is dead! Long Live Global Solidarity’, in *Global Visions*, ed. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs and Jill Cutler, Boston: South End Press, 1993, pp. 257-61, p. 257.

23 Introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 2.

24 On concepts such as “immaterial labour”, “mass intellectuality”, and “general intellect” see also Hardt, *Radical Thought in Italy*, pp. 2, 5.

25 For a close reading of the flaws in their ‘faddish version of the technological and institutional changes in the sphere of production’, see Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, ‘Gems and Baubles in Empire’, in *Historical Materialism*, Vol 10:2, pp. 17-43 pp. 34-5.

26 The Hardt/Negri recognition that ‘the great innovative sectors of immaterial production, from design to fashion, and from electronics to science’ could not function without ‘the “illegal labor” of the great masses’, seems not to extend to acknowledging the dependence on ‘legal’ manual labour.

27 Previously Paola Virno, in ‘Virtuosity and Revolution : The Political Theory of Exodus’ had defined the multitude as a new species once ‘radically heterogeneous to the state’ but who as ‘a historical *result*’ of the transformations ‘within the productive process and the forms of life’, have become absolute protagonists obstructing and dismantling ‘the mechanisms of political representation’. *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 201.

28 Exodus as Hardt is party to explaining elsewhere, is a term ‘that might be understood ... as an extension of “the refusal to work” to the whole of capitalist social relations, as a generalized strategy of refusal or defection’. See Glossary of Concepts in *Radical Thought in Italy*, no page number.

29 Although I hesitate to cite Slavoj Žižek because I lose my way in the labyrinths of his arguments, I cannot resist quoting his call to ‘repeat, in present worldwide conditions, the Leninist gesture of reinventing the revolutionary project in the conditions of imperialism and colonialism ... the key Leninist

of political organization, the one adhering to traditional parties and centralized campaigns, the other working via vertical networks of the multitude in a global democratic movement.

If we look at how the fight against global capitalism is narrated by an activist in the land occupations taking place in Brazil, the Hardt/Negri strictures on the limitations to an anti-globalization position appear inconsequential for in this account the perspective of centrally organized local struggles of agrarian labour conducted within and against the regime of a nation-state is one directed ‘against capital itself’. Nor does usage of the term ‘neoliberal’ suggest anything but an understanding of and a will to counter and overcome the capitalist system. The story of the Movimento Sem Terra told by João Pedro Stedile³¹ is about a planned and organized mass social movement, independent of but not detached from left political parties; a movement acknowledging that ‘the comrades with the greatest ideological clarity’ have played an indispensable role in organizing, educating, and promoting class consciousness; a movement which has forged relations of solidarity with the Zapatistas—despite considering that this remains a national struggle not yet able to broaden into a class struggle (p 99); a movement perceiving its own activities as part of an international network of farmers’ movements with a presence in eighty-seven countries (‘Landless Battalions’, p. 99).

In response to his interlocutor’s question on the help that groups in North America and Europe could give, Stedile, reiterating the axiom that internationalism begins at home, replied: ‘The first thing is to bring down your neoliberal governments. Second, help us to get rid of foreign debt ... Third fight—build mass struggles. Don’t delude yourself that because you have a higher living standard than us, you can build a better world. It’s impossible for you to maintain your current patterns of consumption without exploiting us’ (‘Landless Battalions’, p 103). What emerges from Stedile’s revisions of the analysis and strategies of the older communist movements and his sophisticated political grasp of what internationalism might mean to-day, is that his stance is more insurrectionary in fact and revolutionary in prospect than Hardt’s nebulous ‘vertical networks of the multitude’ destined to build ‘a democratic globalization’.

Hardt and Negri’s theoretical aversion to nation-based struggles replicates that of the post-nationalists for whom all nationalism, at all times, is a tainted form of oppositional consciousness, and the nation-state always a doomed site of resistance³². This tendency chooses to overlook that in traditions which gave theoretical and political sustenance to socialist and internationalist anti-colonial movements, the nation was regarded, as Neil Larsen puts it when describing Lenin’s position, ‘from a consciously historico-political, even strategic perspective’³³. I will not here rehearse the powerful arguments made by Neil Lazarus and Tim Brennan on the need to distinguish between the different historical forms of nationalism; and in response to the assertion that nation-state has effectively been superseded, I will do no more than refer to those who, writing from various vantage points, observe that ‘although contemporary globalization has complicated the nation-state form, it has not rendered it obsolete as a form of political organization’³⁴; or maintain that the nation-state remains ‘the only concrete terrain and framework for political struggle’³⁵, or locate it as the singular site on which international solidarity can grow and the one way under modern conditions ‘to secure respect for weaker societies or peoples’³⁶.

Despite conceding the historical role played by what they call ‘subaltern’ nationalism, and even while saluting ‘the freedom fighters of all the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist wars’ (p. 412), Hardt and Negri are adamant in castigating the outcome of these struggles:

The very concept of a liberatory national sovereignty is ambiguous if not completely contradictory. While this nationalism seeks to liberate the multitudes from foreign domination, it erects domestic structures of domination that are equally severe ... The postcolonial

nation-state functions as an essential and subordinated element in the global organization of the capitalist market ... From India to Algeria and Cuba to Vietnam, *the state is the poisoned gift of national liberation*. (pp. 133-4; italics in original)

This adamantine stance disregards the distinctions between the programmes of bourgeois and Marxist currents within liberation movements, the first seeking to inherit an intact colonial state and appropriate it to promote their own class interests, the other aspiring to abolish the state apparatus and replace it with democratic institutions. Furthermore, not only do Hardt and Negri appear uninterested in the circumstances that have culminated in the retreats of almost all left post-independence regimes, but they overlook that where the postcolonial nation-state is complicit with the capitalist market, this is a consequence not only of capitalism’s universal power but of an ideological choice made by the comprador leaderships of many/most new nation-states who refuse any moves towards delinking the local economies from the global system³⁷.

Within postcolonial studies, the verso to the post-nationalist recoil from nation-based political struggles, is an affection for dispersal, transit and the unhomely³⁸. Although *Empire* does not situate itself in this discussion where ‘diaspora’ is a privileged term, the authors’ discovery of new figures and new forms of international resistance in the non-systemic mode of perpetual and irrepressible subjective movement will be congenial to many postcolonial critics. And indeed it is in the Hardt/Negri book that acclaim of dislocation and dissemination takes manic form: ‘Nomadism and miscegenation’, Hardt and Negri announce, ‘appear here as figures of virtue, as the first ethical practice on the terrain of Empire ... The real heroes of the liberation of the Third World may really have been the emigrants and the flows of population that have destroyed old and new boundaries’ (pp. 362-3)³⁹.

If those who concentrate on physical movement and cultural volatility do draw a necessary attention to the acceleration of ‘transnational circuits’⁴⁰, an embrace of geographical displacements as the desirable norm pays little heed to the punitive barriers hindering the passage of populations from South and East to North and West—restrictions that are structural to an uneven capitalist world-system. Neither do they address the material and existential conditions of the relocated communities which include economic migrants, undocumented immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of ethnic cleansing, and whose mobility far from being an elective ethical practice, is to a large degree coerced⁴¹. Most significantly, the focus on diaspora leaves in obscurity the vast and vastly impoverished populations who cannot and might not choose to migrate, who are not part of the reservoir of cheap labour in either the home cities, the Gulf States or the old and new metropolitan centres; who still engage in subsistence farming, or in extracting raw materials and producing goods under pre-capitalist conditions for consumption in the North, or who are economically redundant and constitute an underclass.

Without suggesting that such populations inhabit a timeless world, or that their material and psychic lives, not to speak of the commodities they produce as labourers, peasants and artisans, are invariably unaffected by the penetration of the world-market⁴², I am proposing that these communities do not have access to the pleasures of the multiple consciousness available to those émigrés who occupy an agreeably liminal location within a cosmopolitan environment. If such reservations should not preempt recognition of the new energies that can be generated amongst migrant populations, especially when relocated in protean urban environments, the Hardt/Negri description of the multitudes in perpetual and life-enhancing motion must all the same appear illusory rather than visionary: ‘In effect what pushes from behind is, negatively, desertion from the miserable cultural and material conditions of imperial reproduction; but positively what pulls forward is the wealth of desire and the accumulation of expressive and productive forces that the processes of

lesson today is that politics without the organizational *form* of the party is politics without politics’. ‘A Plea for Leninist Intolerance’, in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 28: No. 2, Winter 2002, pp. 542-566, pp. 553 and 558. For an expanded version see Zizek’s Introduction and Afterword to *Revolution at the Gates : A Selection of Writings From February to October 1917*, London: Verso, 2002

- 30 ‘Today’s Bandung?’, *New Left Review*, No 14, March/April, 2002, pp 112-118; p. 114
- 31 ‘Landless Battalions’, *New Left Review*, No 15, May/June, 2002, pp. 77-104
- 32 Vilashini Coopan remarking on ‘the ease with which hybridity displaces race and nation’ in the postcolonial discussion, has made a strong case for locating these categories within other axes of social existence (class and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, culture and community) and theorizing the coextensiveness of the terms in a context that is both comparative and historical. See ‘W(h)ither Post-colonial Studies? Towards the Transnational Study of Race and Nation’, in *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, ed Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, for The English Association, 2000, pp. 14 and 19.
- 33 *Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas*, London: Verso, 2001, p. 11
- 34 Pheng Cheah, ‘Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism’, in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1998, p. 291
- 35 Fredric Jameson, ‘Taking on Globalization’, *New Left Review*, 4 July/August 2000, p 65
- 36 ‘Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism’, in *New Left Review*, 7, Jan/Feb 2001, pp 75-84, p 77. For an overview on the debate, see Crystal Bartolovich, ‘Global Capital and Transnationalism’ in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- 37 For some discussion on revolutionary liberation movements, see my ‘Liberation Theory : Variations on Themes of Marxism and Modernity’, in *Marxism and Modernity*, ed. Crystal Bartolowich and Neil Lazarus, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002
- 38 For articulations of positions which welcome diaspora for the enriching experiences this affords, as the location from which to theorize the contemporary condition, and as in itself engendering a mode of thinking that can roam far and wide because liberated from the fixity of place and community, see for example Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994; Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996; Ali Behdad, ‘Global Disjunctions, Diasporic Differences, and the New World (Dis-)Order’, in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, Oxford : Blackwell, 2000
- 39 It is sobering at this point to be reminded by Nigel Harris that ‘Most people are fundamentally rooted at home, and only the margin of the most energetic, talented and ambitious move—if they can afford the high costs ... And when they move, they do so specifically to earn money with which they can then return home, not to go into exile.’ ‘Everybody in?’ *Red Pepper*, August, 2000, pp. 26-7, p 26.
- 40 See for example Manthia Diawara observation that in West Africa ‘[a]ll sorts of merchandise from a variety of origins are on display in traditional markets ... Everything from computers, fax machines, and brand-name shoes to gold jewellery is found covered with dust in the market-place.’ ‘Regional Imaginary in Africa’, in *The Culture of Globalization*, ed Jameson and Miyoshi, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998
- 41 Consider the women from China, Bangladesh, Thailand and the Philippines who ‘have paid a recruitment fee in order to be shipped to Saipan, a half-forgotten US island in Micronesia. On arrival they are crowded into barracks where they have to work 70-80 hours a week without anything but a floor to sleep on. Because Saipan is a US territory, everything produced there is duty-free and without quotas, ready to be sold in the mainland at The Gap, J. Crew and Ralph Lauren stores, proudly bearing a “Made in USA” label’. See ‘Sweatshops are everywhere’, in *Red Pepper*, Jan 2002, p 10
- 42 See *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Jameson and

globalization have determined in the consciousness of every individual and social group (*Empire*, p. 213). Such optimistic projections are a reminder of *Empire's* spectacular failure to address the substantive and experiential situations of the settled populations of the nation-states of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Paul Smith has drawn attention to theorists and critics seduced by '[m]agical notions such as that of fully global space replete with an ecstatic buzz of cyber communication, or of an instantaneous mobility of people, goods and services, or of a global market place hooked up by immaterial money that flashes round the globe many times a minute'⁴³. Without suggesting that Hardt and Negri advance this facile case, the delivery of their thesis on 'perpetual motion' and 'the processes of mixture and hybridization' generated by *Empire*, (p. 60) is all the same as resonant of a specious exhilaration:

The passage to *Empire* emerges from the twilight of modern sovereignty. In contrast to imperialism, *Empire* establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentred and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. *Empire* manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow. (pp. xiii-xiii)

The Hardt/Negri definition of 'Empire' as decentred and deterritorialized coincides with others that also circumvent the might of an actually existing colossus which has aptly been described as 'an empire ... predicated, like past empires, on political control for the purpose of economic control, and resource and surplus extraction'⁴⁴. For as Peter Gowan argues, '[A]ny prospect of bringing humanity towards genuine unity on a global scale would have to confront the social and political relations of capitalism with a clarity and trenchancy from which most representatives of this

current shrink; and any hope of altering these can only be nullified by evasion or edulcoration of the realities of the sole superpower'⁴⁵.

Significantly when Samir Amin urges the building of a global political system that is not in the service of the global market, he looks to the creation of anti-comprador fronts within the old and new nation-states that would be capable of preparing 'the ground for a people's international, robust enough to deal with world-devouring appetite of capital' (*Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, p.150). This is a reminder that Old Internationalism offers an inspiration to those engaged in reinventing programmes, structures and strategies in the fight against contemporary global capitalism⁴⁶. The backing of institutionalized Internationals is no longer available; nor are the histories of past Internationals invariably edifying. But those who regard themselves as anti-imperialist should surely acknowledge the urge towards and the practice of a borderless resistance to capitalism's unbounded oppression. It therefore seems imperative that Internationalism and the Internationals, for long objects of study in the social and political sciences⁴⁷, become part of a broader interdisciplinary discussion⁴⁸. If this happens, then the concrete and refined historical analysis of Lenin and Trotsky on the national question and internationalism is essential reading; as is the need to become acquainted with the paradoxical programmes and strategic interventions of the Third International under the Stalin regime, during which the project of building socialism in one country and the immediate interests of the Soviet Union deformed the commitment to international solidarity⁴⁹. This is not to deny that for whatever byzantine reasons, the USSR did render military and financial assistance to embattled colonial populations, and did by its very presence stay the armed fist of the United States.

For some time Marxists had anticipated that the most immediate prospects for organized mass class struggles against capitalism's dominance lay in the once-colonized world where the urban and rural poor are experiencing exploitation at the hands of recently empowered native ruling classes and popular dissent is endemic. Writing now David Harvey claims that '[t]here is not a region in the world where manifestations of anger and discontent with the capitalist system cannot be found' ('Globalization in Question', p.13), and he goes on to urge the necessity of systematically coordinated struggles against capitalism, arguing that because local and broad-based movements lack coherence, direction and a vision of an anti-capitalist alternative, it is urgent that dispersed popular resistances which do not immediately appear to be proletarian in the traditional sense, are brought together. And although Harvey is not committed to an old-style vanguard party 'that imposes a singular goal', he insists that '[w]e still badly need a socialist avant-garde ... We need not only to understand but also to create organizations, institutions, doctrines, programs, formalized structures and the like' ('Globalization in Question', pp.15,16). To embark on such work presupposes that globalization is recognized as yet another reconfiguration of systemic capitalism, that the theoretical repudiation of internationalist anti-capitalist movements is dispelled, that the concept of the party is restored in a form disentangled from its Stalinist distortions, and that the notion of the engaged intellectual is again in place. If this perspective makes sense, then the Hardt/Negri insistence on 'Empire' as a paradigm shift from capitalist-as-imperialism will appear mistaken, and their trust in the autonomous and spontaneous creative capacity of the multitudes to deliver communism, must seem a mirage.

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Miyoshi, Durham: Duke University Press, 1999

43 *Millennial Dreams: Contemporary Culture and Capital in the North*, London: Verso, 1997, p 13.

44 Rahul Mahajan, author of *The New Crusade: America's War on Terrorism* (Monthly Review Press) writing in *Red Pepper*, September 2002, 'Iraq and the new Great Game', pp. 17-18, p. 18.

45 'Neoliberal cosmopolitanism', *New Left Review*, 11, Sep/Oct 2001, pp 79-93. p. 93. For another optimistic vision of globalization from below, see Richard Falk. 'The Making of Global Citizenship' in *Global Visions*, ed. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs and Jill Cutler, Boston: South End Press, 1993, pp. 39.

46 It is surely fitting to recall some recent and more distant manifestations of a theoretical position and a political allegiance grounded in class affiliation, and anti-imperialist partisanship: an Indian exiled by the Raj who assisted in the formation of the Mexican Communist Part (N.N.Roy); the participation in the Spanish Civil War of African-Americans volunteers to the Lincoln Brigade; a Caribbean intellectual (C.L.R James) who involved himself in both Pan-Africanism and metropolitan left politics; African insurgents who during the nineteen-seventies greeted the popular anti-fascist upsurge in the imperial homeland while engaged in fighting the Portuguese army in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau; an Argentinean (Ché Guevara) instrumental in the making of the Cuban insurrection, subsequently a combatant in the anti-imperialist Congolese war and then a prime mover of the abortive revolution in Bolivia during which he was killed; a French intellectual (Régis Debray) who was imprisoned for his part in the same uprising; Cuban troops defending the newly independent regimes of Mozambique and Angola against the military incursions of the then South Africa acting on behalf of international capitalism.

47 See Alejandro Colás, 'Putting Cosmopolitanism Into Practice: the Case of Socialist Internationalism', in *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, Vol.23, No.3, 1994, pp 513-534

48 This process has already begun: see Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, Tim Brennan, 'Postcolonial Studies Between the European Wars: An Intellectual History', in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Crystal Bartolowich and Neil Lazarus, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Perry Anderson, 'Internationalism: A Breviary', *New Left Review*, 14, March/April 2002, pp 5-25.

49 The conduct of the Soviet Union towards the anarcho-syndicalists and the P.O.U.M during the Spanish Civil War is one such notorious instance, as is the failure of the PCF to support the colonial wars in French Indo-China and Algeria.

Br(other) Rabbit's Tale

Tom Jennings

One of the central conceits of *8 Mile*—Curtis Hanson's (2002) film about an aspiring hip hop performer, starring controversial rapper Eminem—seems to have eluded the notice of critics and reviewers. This adds to the levels of contradiction and irony in the way the film tackles the subject of hip hop—which, if not ignored altogether in serious debate and polite conversation alike, is generally condemned and dismissed as one of the most scandalous, degraded and degrading forms of contemporary popular culture. Partly this opprobrium results from rap's refusal to practice the subterfuge usually necessary to sidestep sanctions when bringing lower class vernacular into the public domain. But whatever its significance in terms of social class, hip hop and rap music derive from and draw upon the rich veins of African American culture, even if in America itself and on a global scale young people of all races and backgrounds have taken it to heart, and take part in it in their millions. Even so, the musical forms, performance sites and conventions, expressive styles and lyrical and narrative structures employed in rap are most usefully seen as developments—in the context of today's social, cultural and technological environments—of African American community and artistic traditions also prominent in the blues, jazz, soul and funk, and in Black oral folklore, storytelling and literature.²

Black and White and Read All Over

So despite its commercial success US rap is still generally perceived as a predominantly Black art-form, even if increasingly marketed to white youth. What, then, does it mean for the main protagonist of *8 Mile* not only to be white, but also to choose the stage alias of 'B.Rabbit'? In the script his friends affectionately clarify the 'B' as the rather childlike 'Bunny'. This is appropriate given the Oedipal conflicts experienced by Eminem's character, Jimmy Smith Jr., and as a bonus also refers to cartoon trickster Bugs Bunny. But his 'official' *nom de guerre* as an M.C. who competes for supremacy in lyrical 'battles' is not Bunny, but B. Rabbit—referring to a figure from a different genre, but with similar levels of complexity and ambivalence and a parallel degree of social and political significance. Brer Rabbit, along with the predatory Brer Fox and other animals living in the 'briar patch', is a mythic hero of children's stories, and for older generations something of a lower class antidote to Beatrix Potter *et al.* His origins lie squarely within fables and parables refined and passed down orally in enslaved communities—as social practice rather than literary form—educating Black youngsters in the ways of the world, how to stay out of trouble and even, maybe, come out on top.

From their humble beginnings (at the cotton-picking grass-roots, so to speak), these cautionary and inspirational tales passed into acceptable literature courtesy of Joel Chandler Harris, from Atlanta, Georgia, who was the first author to publish such an extensive collection of 'Negro' stories, as related by fictional narrator 'Uncle Remus' standing for the realism, wisdom, benevolence and political savvy of Black elders. In literary criticism starting from the 1920s Harlem Renaissance, Harris is cited as an exemplary case of the appropriation by white people of Black cultural resources. Now in *8 Mile* we have the first Hollywood representation of underground hip hop, but written, produced and directed by white people, telling the story of a white rapper trying to get by. The choice of moniker refers to this troubled history, and to the contemporary exploitation of Black culture via the commodification of rap

'Didn't the fox never catch the rabbit, Uncle Remus?' asked the little boy the next evening.

'He come mighty nigh it, honey, sho's you born.'¹



music and the ambiguous presence of white people within this field.

Tourism, Tarzan and Toryism

To many critics, this presence is not ambiguous at all, but represents straightforward colonisation—a view appealing to politically correct liberals, who are already predisposed to rubbish hip hop (and any other lower class cultural expression resistant to their moralising). So novelist Jeanette Winterson sees Jimmy Smith as merely: “a tourist ... a white man going into Black culture and, lo and behold, he does it better”.³ This echoes Black separatist discourses aiming to maintain the purity of hip hop as Black culture. In US rap magazine *The Source*, Harry Allen invokes the figure of Tarzan to explain the success of both Eminem and Jimmy Smith Jr.: “a white infant, abandoned by its mother and father and raised by apes, who rises to dominate the non-white people and environment around him”, taking advantage of “the Black facilitation of white development”. This process is argued to be pivotal to the contemporary “refinement of white supremacy” where, for example, “hip-hop is valuable for one reason only: because a lot of white people are into it”.⁴

Both kinds of criticism are persuasive to a certain extent, arguing in essence that any active involvement of white people in Black culture necessarily implies theft and mastery—and, after all, the history of imperialism and white racism (not to mention, more specifically, Western popular music) has consistently led in that direction. Unfortunately, as well as entailing a rather simplistic, static and closed conception of both Black culture and hip hop, such judgements are extremely pessimistic about the potential for meaningful interaction between Black and white people, whether in culture, politics, or any other arena. However, Eminem's character is not dubbed 'Lord Greystoke'; and the origins and associations of Brer Rabbit have survived Joel Chandler Harris's colonisation as well as Enid Blyton's bourgeois white supremacist erasure. Maybe hip hop's Black roots are still hardy and perennial in the briar patch, whatever their fate in the well-to-do garden.

If so, a distinction must be drawn between what happens at the grass roots of hip hop among

real live individuals and groups, and how this is mediated, transformed and distorted in the public sphere. The film clearly wants to straddle both realms in purporting to depict participation in a local hip hop scene, while itself being a commercial product aiming for mass consumption. Yet critical positions such as those outlined above refuse to consider such complexity, preferring 'black and white' caricatures which are just as crude, restrictive and downright unhelpful as those found in the discourses of politicians, the media, elite cultural institutions and all the other vested interests inimical in principle to any of our subversive pleasures.

Into the Melting Pot

So, in a post-industrial Detroit suitably photographed by Rodrigo Prieto (*Amores Perros*) as toxic and rotting, Jimmy Smith Jr. struggles to carve out some autonomy and escape the rabbit's fate (to be tamed, captured and eaten). The hostility and hopelessness of the ghetto offer him only insecure drudge jobs, reinforced by his equally bankrupt family dynamics and relationships with women. His crew provides a nurturing surrogate family for its members, immersed since childhood in hip hop as part of the popular cultural landscape. They have gravitated towards the local rap scene, led by Future (Mekhi Phifer) who hosts regular nightclub events featuring contests between aspiring MCs. Witnessing and encouraging his emerging wordplay skills, his friends urge Jimmy to overcome his shyness and insecurity and take part. The film covers the period in which he tentatively enters and negotiates the contours of this vibrant public sphere, practising and elaborating his lyrics in various settings—culminating in victory over lead rapper of rival posse 'The Free World'.

8 Mile does capture, if sketchily, the atmosphere of grass roots underground hip hop—and is thus one of very few representations in the mainstream visual media of a phenomenon common in urban centres globally.⁵ It marks out the different interests and agendas of those involved, and correctly emphasises the quintessential site of hip hop performance—the party. Here boundaries between production and consumption blur as DJs, MCs and the dancehall audience collectively interact in call and response, bodily and aesthetic

appreciation and ritual communal celebration.

Slaughtered, Skinned and Guttled

Beyond that, the meagre characterisations and backstory barely hint at how Jimmy Smith's personal trials and tribulations have given him the drive and energy (let alone the poetic skill) to craft the rap performances that the film is structured around. Worse, B. Rabbit's lyrical attacks as a battle MC are similarly one-dimensional. They do conform to some conventions of the form, weaving biographical and local material into references to popular culture, current affairs and the traditions and history of hip hop—focusing on the socio-economic position shared with his audience in the here and now. But he avoids deeper issues of identity, difference, roots and origins, except when criticising in others the commonplace discourses of racial prejudice and machismo's sexism, misogyny and homophobia. So, pre-empting the recycling of 'poor white trash' stereotypes, he acknowledges and embraces these, glosses their injustice and external causes, and trumps them with well-rehearsed elaborations exposing their lazy repetition.

Most seriously, the price of failure to invoke a positive presence of his own is an inability to boast—that archetypal rapping device crystallising one's rhetorical manœuvres and stylistic prowess into a stage embodiment of gravitas and purpose. Thus at one point he 'dies' on stage, unable to respond to a Black audience's collective ridicule of his whiteness. He can deal with it individually, though, using his smart mouth to puncture his opponents' pretensions. He cuts The Free World adrift from their roots in Black oral traditions, accusing them of empty posing (by copying 2-Pac—a seminal 1990s MC), rather than engaging in a genuine process of growth using the wisdom of the ancestors. Capped with the revelation of their middle class backgrounds, this clinches the argument for the crowd.

B. Rabbit's self-erasure is intelligible, given the historical status of 'whiteness' as a badge of automatic (fictional) superiority and (actual) domination over others. Flirting with the white racist denigration of Blackness, he insists on the pathetic nature of whiteness, and is content for the Black audience—as his social equals—to judge. Nevertheless, his rejection of minstrelsy (pretending to be 'Black'), while important, extends to a weak integration of style, lyrics and music—he has no charisma, raps with a clumsy, fractured 'flow', and his rhymes consistently miss the beat and work against the rhythm. All that remains is linguistic trickery fuelled by disembodied anger, detached from a coherent personality, historical anchorage and the sense of cultural continuity implicit in African-American popular music. As it happens, this recalls the passage of Brer Rabbit from subversive West African trickster, via transgressive free-living slave, to sanitised cuddly toy.

White, Sliced and Wholesome

Having rendered its hero insubstantial, inoffensive and bland, *8 Mile* works as a safe, conformist narrative of 'poor boy makes good' in that long tradition of conservative Hollywood films exhorting the popular mass audience to keep their heads down, work hard and fulfil the promise of the (white anglo saxon) protestant ethic. But if the talent to justify success is now sacrificed to local ordinari-ness, hip hop's invention and imagination are lost along with the complex, diverse artistry of its practitioners. As usual, cinema can only represent the richness of lower class life in reductive stereotypes. But the big payoff is that the main attraction rap offers its audiences—a Black challenge to the hypocrisies of mainstream society—is falsified.

All signposted in the allusion to Brer Rabbit.

Ritual naming as transformation is a frequent theme in Black cultural visions of transcendence, yet this choice of name marks a space made vacant by violation, exactly signifying a lack of progression. Drawing attention to their own deceit is thus the film makers' alibi for viewing hip hop through the lens of whiteness—because a biopic about any of the Black superstar rappers would have required none of these levels of concealment and evasion to guarantee healthy box office. But it would have had to tackle an issue that the big money behind Hollywood blockbusters is terrified of—the increasing centrality of race *combined with class*—a theme familiar in the daily lives of the mixed hip hop nation of American youth. Instead, *8 Mile* counterpoises class *against* race, just as all shades of reactionary and separatist US political discourse have consistently done since the 1970s—mystifying deprivation with euphemisms of Black deficiency in the former, and nailing the prospects of the Black poor to the interests of the vanguard middle classes in the latter.

Convenience Food for Thought

Naturally, in its cynical exercise of postmodern irony, the film wants to have it both ways, so the aspirational trajectory as well as the promotional strategy devolve onto Eminem. But he has been eviscerated of his exhilarating deployment of infantile excess, the shock tactics aimed squarely at respectable society and hysterical cartoon exaggerations exposing the effects of poverty and despair on the personal and social fabrics. Surely only the ignorance of critics, the gullibility of consumers, and the complacency of power could confuse *this* performer with *this* role. Now that is an unsavoury alliance—albeit one very convenient for those to whom culture is simply entertainment and hence profit.

For *8 Mile* to fit Hollywood conventions and its own publicity, the most salient features of both rap's Black heritage and Eminem are effaced, so that the film hides its most serious flaws by trading on his reputation. Hamstrung by their whole-sale collusion in this, the reviews were able to recognise neither the flaws nor the (limited) achievements.⁶ Now, the status of critics in the popular media is often predicated upon the public's naive susceptibility to the commercial wiles of the Brer Foxes of capitalism. But here they unwittingly reproduce it, obliterating the distinctions between the marketing hype generated around a commodity, and what the material used might mean to its audiences. No surprise, either, that *8 Mile's* most convincing stereotypes are the hustlers picking over local rap for its juiciest packageable morsels, just as mainstream record companies do with their raw material. With Eminem this means crafting a celebrity brand image that isolates, fetishises and falsifies each of his attributes as unique and unsurpassed individual achievements of (white) genius, rather than the minor (if interesting) variations on well-established hip hop themes that they undoubtedly are.

The Multiple Slim Shady

Eminem's vision starts from vicious infantile revenge fantasies, switching indiscriminately among targets—his mother, wife, peers, other MCs, the social environment, economy, media or government—attacked for their various failures to support his needs and wishes, in moods veering from depression and self-disgust to persecution mania and full-blown paranoia. The rage is channelled into lyrical anecdotes in the familiar hip hop registers of lower class teenage rebelliousness, abusive hypermasculinity and gangsta rap



nihilism, with video vignettes dressed in the lurid iconography of exploitation film genres, comics, animation and a general wallowing in trash culture, kitsch and bad taste. Ice-T—an original 'gangsta rapper'—aptly describes him as the "Jerry Springer of rap", practising the art of "saying the most wrong thing possible".⁷ This captures the sense of a community of grievances being played out, but misses the psychotic core—a splintered and embattled self, deriving purpose and energy in combatting the absence of unconditional love (e.g. respect as an MC) with hatred, bile and malice.⁸

The comic artfulness of the rendering of nightmare into narrative, and its catharsis as performance, positions Eminem as a tragic clown more in the comedy tradition (from Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor onwards) linking pain, shock and mirth. Whereas the many talented hip hop jokers have tended to play it just for laughs, the feelings Eminem expresses are audibly and visibly heartfelt. And what takes the shock tactics beyond the adolescent exuberance and sleaze of rap acts marketed as teenage rebellion, like the Beastie Boys or Smut Peddlers, is the focus on the dire social implications and circumstances of his existential misery, as well as the converging political and economic interests that demand it. Put bluntly, the party always goes (badly) wrong.

This configuration follows the 'deranged MC' subgenre—itself derived from the urban mythic 'mad and bad' Black man. There is even the occasional presence of producer and father figure Dr Dre, or Detroit rap crew D12, as a social safety net, as with other famous rap portrayals of lunacy and inadequacy. But Eminem is basically solipsistic. Alone in his internal universe of conflict—not alienated *from* others but *within*—he has no shared aim or project for successful performance to embody. Unable to take solace and courage from a Black heritage, he accepts that the self-destructive logic of his abjection promises no escape.⁹ Thus the lyrics lay scattershot blame, vehemently but without specificity or the explanatory power to convince, at a system which is mad, or "politically incorrect".¹⁰

Hip Hop Hype

Just as the compulsive staccato processing of language in multiple alliteration, rhyming and metaphor reproduces the obsessive repetition of psychosis; so the integration of linguistic elements into spoken flow and rhythm is likewise fragmented. Whereas what Adam Krims¹¹ terms 'speech-

effusiveness' is now typical of the most skilful and innovative rap, many practitioners of it are far more accomplished than Eminem—both in terms of the musicality of the vocals (pitch, timbre, texture), and their meshing with the antiphony and polyphony in the instrumental. Failing to align the voice and poetic metre with the beat hinders the pleasurable experience of the music with the body as well as the mind—hence the usual judgment within hip-hop that Eminem is very far from being the best rapper around.¹²

But the publicity terms he has been saddled with—and which he consents to for the sake of a career—say otherwise, because those who succeed can then be held up as examples of 'the American Way' able to transcend their backgrounds (of class and/or race)—exceptions which prove the rule. So Eminem is produced and sold as universal (i.e. white) novelty pop,¹³ even while coincidentally undermining various racial stereotypes that neither he nor his commercial backers or critical

salvation is instead implied by the honesty and humility of his engagement with hip hop. Against all the odds, this gives the gratification of finding a voice and deploying a language—a conclusion common to adherents of hip hop in all its manifestations across the world.

Hip Hop Hope

If Eminem's ravings lack the social embeddedness to provide historical perspective or communal insight into the nature of the processes which afflict people and make them mad—these are precisely the kind of criteria which have consistently given Black artists the desire and wherewithal to seek paths to redemption. This kind of ethics has been a preoccupation of hip hop since the start—notable in Afrika Bambaata's Zulu Nation; Grandmaster Flash ('The Message'); KRS-One, Public Enemy and Rakim; through to hardcore via NWA, 2-Pac, Wu-Tang Clan and Nas (among thousands of less famous examples). However, each new wave of rap styles has been facilitated, amid

accusations of dilution, by the steady growth of relatively independent music industry sectors with a strong Black presence, striving to influence and moderate commercialisation. In this climate, class politics of any kind have rarely been prioritised, although a quietly persistent strand alongside the much heralded Black nationalism and pride.¹⁸

So, Chuck D of Public Enemy is surely correct in saying that, being white, Eminem can tackle "issues that Black rappers are encouraged to leave alone for marketing and commercial reasons".¹⁹ But that's not the whole story. The Black traditions have persistently militated towards subverting oppression by wresting its adverse cultural and discursive conditions into some form of social agency and control. Since the ideology of Black capitalism—popularised by the Nation of Islam, Spike Lee and Public Enemy, for example—came to be embraced by US hip hop entrepreneurs (and reflected in the music), economic control has taken centre stage. Thus record labels and management companies that are (at least partly) Black owned and controlled have gained commercial footholds by deliberately packaging the music to appeal to

local Black community markets (in Atlanta, California, Miami, New Orleans, etc.), pandering to corporate media (so-called 'hip-pop') and/or crossing over to white rock and heavy metal (Run DMC, Ice-T, Public Enemy, Cypress Hill, etc). However, even the current 'ghetto fabulous' fairy stories of wealth and glamour, which incorporate mainstream pop and R&B, still retain muted elements of social critique in Blues laments and lower class sentimentalism. Similarly, the Black Mafia subgenre could be interpreted as an oblique critique of capitalism as crime, equating the competitive rivalry of the music industry with mob families who were once mere street gangs. If so, gangsta rap might represent an underclass corrective to the moral sophistry inherent in a philosophy of uplift through the success of the few—but which absolutely *requires* the continuing failure of the many.²⁰

Sadly, if predictably, marketing imperatives work hard to hinder such incipient political poten-

tial from clearing the space to develop. The media, politicians and major record companies may have their pound of institutionally racist flesh, but money sets the parameters. 2-Pac is a typical case—his attempt to meld lower class manifesto ('Thug Life') and Black Panther-derived social credo was sabotaged by the commercial strategy of his label, Death Row, who progressively spiked all but the most nihilistic material.²¹ On the whole, the transgressive power of lower class vernacular retains the affiliation of core audiences, but being presented solely in terms of Blackness sells more widely, engages the pro-censorship Black and white middle classes, suits the scare-mongering of the media and conservative politicians, and fits various agendas of racial essentialism and Black unity (hence the furore over Eminem's casual disruption of these rhetorics). Paul Gilroy characterises the outcome of this ideological tangle in the cultural compromise formation that is contemporary hip hop as "revolutionary conservatism". He points out that its utterly hybrid and syncretic nature, and the diversity (especially in terms of class) of its producers and users account for both hip hop's unprecedented global popularity and the consistent failure of public discourses to understand it.²²

Arts of Resistance

Russell Potter argues that the resistive potential of hip hop lies in its continuing capacity to articulate contemporary vernacular subversions of dominant cultures, in late capitalist conditions of increasingly global and frantic commodification. The significance of African American traditions is that their particular cultural trajectory from slavery till now has enhanced the ability to creatively steal, mock, honour and re-present ideas, words and sounds simultaneously, in order to convey experience, history, pain and desire in artistic expression—and have thus been especially well-placed to exploit post-modern forms of bricolage and revision.²³ So from a core, or benchmark, of black practice, hip hop has mobilised the whole range of cultural material at its disposal, using all available techniques and technologies, to suit its own local and equally subordinated expressive needs—including those of racially mixed and culturally hybrid communities and scenes. This has enabled its worldwide dispersal, through a commodified 'word of mouth', to overflow and sidestep all of the clumsy and misguided attempts at policing and suppression.²⁴

But while these vernacular cultures can provide the necessary grounds for transgression, this can easily resolve into mere coping mechanisms on the part of the oppressed, who remain contained by power. This danger is acute given that the fetishised fashion accessory of superficial 'blackness' in style without content is now offered unremittingly for consumption, including the purely commercial manufacture of simulations of grass-roots practice. Many marketed hip hop acts, black as well as white, could be interpreted as domesticated Brer Rabbits in this sense, such as Puff Daddy/P. Diddy (a bourgeois 'class minstrel' and rather bad MC), Vanilla Ice (fake 'black' and fake 'street') or N'Sync's Justin Timberlake (fake everything)—not Eminem, though, who is to some extent honourable even if failing to outwit the Fox. Conversely, various derivations of hip hop have virtually offered themselves up for recuperation, taking themselves too seriously through pretension or elitism. In the UK this might include the trip-hop and drum and bass genres, which sought to legitimise themselves in terms of mainstream aesthetic values and the accumulation of cultural capital; or the remnants of rave cultures whose absorption into mere weekend recreation seems virtually complete. Whereas in rap music the dense and sophisticated vernacular, the oppositional stance and refusal of respectability, and grass-roots credibility, affiliation and involvement



detractors, for their diverse reasons, dwell on. A foul-mouthed, drug-crazed psychopath hardly fits the historic white 'genius' profile; there is none of the middle class 'wigger's affected pose of fashionable Black styles; and the depiction of family dysfunction and moral failure turns on its head the politically-charged discourse of Black pathology hiding behind class rhetoric—the latter being notable given rap's reluctance to tackle this directly.¹⁴

However, Eminem's silence on his personal experience of racism—except individual prejudice against his whiteness—shows that he is no 'race traitor'¹⁵. This avoidance allows him to assert the irrelevance of race, substituting the world view of the universal loser—just a "regular guy"¹⁶ like millions of others. If challenged, he projects back onto whoever is his enemy at the time—"I am whatever you say I am"—where the simulacra of his personae and their progress in the mediated world preclude any 'real'¹⁷. His personal route to

combine in ways that, even after more than two decades, still seem to completely confound the status quo—as the reception of *8 Mile* in clueless celebration or malicious dismissal suggests.

James Scott has revealed how colonised and enslaved subjects communicate among themselves using ‘hidden transcripts’ in language and cultural activities.²⁵ These nurture resistance to domination and keep hope alive, while the explicit versions in ‘public transcripts’ purport to and seem to fit the demands of the ruling groups—to whom the ‘real’ meaning is opaque. Scott concludes that when political action does develop against domination, it is the hidden transcripts which provide the discursive and cultural weaponry and ammunition which explode into overt expressions of revolt. Maybe hip hop’s enduring achievement will be that, in terms of surface appearance in the age of Spectacle, the hidden and public transcripts are the same—although the meanings are worlds apart. The complacent networks of privilege try to suppress the open expression of the vernacular, mistaking symptom for cause and in the process revealing the stupidity, venality and complicity of their cultural disciplinarians. But the politics of rap’s reception provides the younger, newer strata of colonised, enslaved, migrant and surplus urban populations with the opportunity to bear witness to the obscenity of the globalised New World Order and its neo-feudal military economy.

This isn’t politics in the recognised formal, programmatic sense; it’s a set of cultural patterns which adeptly resist the hitherto false promises of such straightjacketing—on the part of those excluded from all other sites and systems of cultural and political expression. By the understanding and generalisation of the details of specific experience into actively shared anger, private dissatisfaction can be transformed into a rap(t) productive engagement when, all around, defeatist cynicism is a more intelligible response to today’s most unpromising of circumstances (and fostered as such as a deliberate tactic to shortcircuit opposition). As Paul Gilroy stresses, quoting Rakim, “It ain’t where you’re from, it’s where you’re at.”²⁶ The question of where you want to go is still open.

Notes

1. From ‘The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story’, Joel Chandler Harris, in *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings*, illustrated by A.B. Frost, Appleton Century Crofts Inc., 1908.
2. The best introduction to hip hop is still Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, Wesleyan University Press, 1994. Discussions of the African American genealogy of the Blues and Black literature respectively can be found in: Houston A. Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory*, University of Chicago Press, 1984; and Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, Oxford University Press, 1988. For the global reach of rap music see: David Toop, *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*, Pluto Press, 1991; and Tony Mitchell (Ed.) *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the U.S.A.*, Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
3. In: BBC 2’s *Newsnight Review*, 17th January, 2003.
4. ‘The unbearable whiteness of emceeing: what the eminence of Eminem says about race’, *The Source*, February 2003, pp.91-2.
5. Other than music videos, of course. The nearest mainstream cinema has come recently is the portrayal of a rap poet (Saul Williams) in *Slam* (Marc Levine, 1999), and a documentary on hip hop DJing (*Scratch*, Doug Pray, 2001).
6. For example Ryan Gilbey, ‘In the ghetto’, *Sight & Sound*, February 2003, pp.36-7.
7. In: *Lock Up Your Daughters: Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘N’ Roll*, BBC 1, 2003.
8. Most clearly seen in *The Slim Shady LP* (1999) and *The Marshall Mathers LP* (2000, both Aftermath Entertainment/ Interscope Records); and D12’s

Devil’s Night (Shady Records/ Interscope Records, 2001).

9. In ‘Insane in the membrane: the Black movie anti-hero of the ‘90s’, *The Source*, May 1997, pp.36-37, Marcus Reeves shows how this staple figure in Blaxploitation films relates social conditions to *behaviour* rather than to *being*. See also S.Craig Watkins, *Representing: Hip Hop Culture and the Production of Black Cinema*, University of Chicago Press, 1999.
10. Eminem, in: *Rhythm Nation*, BBC Radio 1, 28th March 1999. His latest release, *The Eminem Show* (Aftermath Records, 2002) leavens the shock tactics with faltering attempts at serious commentary and some rather bland pop and rock sentimentality parachuted in.
11. Adam Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
12. Eminem freely acknowledges his shortcomings here, for example in *Angry Blonde*, Regan Books/Harper Collins, 2000, and Chuck Weiner (Ed.) *Eminem ‘Talking’: Marshall Mathers In His Own Words*, Omnibus Press, 2002. Hilariously, Will Self mistakes this for a “white sensibility”: *Newsnight Review*, BBC 2, 17th January, 2003.
13. UK rap critics generally appreciate the wordplay skills (and little else) in the Eminem “circus”: e.g. Philip Mlynar’s review of *The Eminem Show in Hip Hop Connection*, July 2002, p.77. But again, the final judgement still tends to come down to race.
14. Unless veiled by ‘the dozens’ or displaced into sex stories. See: Robin D.G. Kelley’s contemporary-historical analysis, *Yo Mama’s Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*, Beacon Press, 1997; and Bell Hooks’ painstaking and moving discussion in *Salvation: Black People and Love*, Women’s Press, 2001. Paul Gilroy examines related questions of freedom, race and gender relations in Black music in ‘After the love has gone: bio-politics and etho-poetics in the Black public sphere’, *Public Culture*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1994, pp.51-76.
15. In the sense of “treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity”, Noel Ignatiev & John Garvey (Eds.) *Race Traitor*, Routledge, 1990; and contrary to Tom Paulin’s wish-fulfilment (ascribing to Eminem sentiments like “I don’t want to be white any more”), in *Newsnight Review*, BBC 2, 17th January, 2003. For whatever reasons, Eminem has scrupulously edited out of his lyrics all signs of the lower class white racism and much of the Black ghetto vernacular he will have grown up with. Incidentally in UK hip-hop, racism is also viewed depressingly often as mere individual prejudice rather than a historical and institutional phenomenon.
16. This is Eminem’s mantra, repeated in countless interviews, apparently unaware of the skin privilege giving him the luxury of asserting it. So, receiving probation in April 2001 for a weapons offence, he stated that the judge “treated me fair, like any other human being” (Mansel Fletcher, ‘A year of living dangerously’, *Hip Hop Connection*, January 2002, pp.59-61). Whereas a Black ‘regular guy’ would get jail time—particularly pertinent given the new ‘plantation slavery’ of US prisons and sentencing policy.
17. ‘The Way I Am’, *The Marshall Mathers LP*. Meanwhile, the media’s celebrity chatter remains oblivious to creative licence, obsessing about the lyrics’ literal truth, for example in Nick Hasted’s, *The Dark Story of Eminem*, Omnibus Press, 2003.
18. Nelson George’s *Hip Hop America* (Penguin, 1998) gives a concise account of the commercial rap industry’s development.
19. In: *Lock Up Your Daughters: Sex, Drugs and Rock ‘N’ Roll*, BBC 1, 2003. Apparently Dr Dre also expected less censorship pressures on a white artist (Ian Gittins, Eminem, Carlton Books, 2001, p.17).
20. See Todd Boyd, *Am I Black Enough For You? Popular Culture from the Hood and Beyond*, Indiana University Press, 1997. As well as the liberal-conservative themes of films like *Boyz n The Hood* (John Singleton, 1991) and *The Player’s Club* (Ice Cube, 1996), there is now a sickening trend for hip hop celebrities to publish self-help homilies and clichés about believing in yourself and working hard to gain success (for example in books by Queen Latifah and LL Cool J). Also note that



- ‘gangsta’ now conflates the earlier terms ‘hard-core’ and ‘reality’ rap in a classic African American Signifyin’ move.
21. See Armond White, *Rebel for the Hell of it: the Life of Tupac Shakur*, Quartet, 1997; and Michael Eric Dyson, *Holler If You Hear Me: Searching For Tupac Shakur*, Plexus, 2001. Earlier, the inspiring political initiatives from the 1992 LA uprising and subsequent gang truce were neglected in commercial LA rap: see, for example Mike Davis, *L.A. Was Just the Beginning. Urban Revolt in the United States: A Thousand Points of Light*. Open Magazine Pamphlets, 1992.
 22. Paul Gilroy, ‘After the love has gone’ (see note 14), and *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures*, Serpent’s Tail, 1993. The importance of hybridity and syncretic processes in the development of Black culture is stressed in his *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Verso, 1993. Many writers of the ‘hip hop generation’ use this kind of analysis to avoid the critical impasse which results from the assumption of a singular Black (or any other) identity—for example in Mark Anthony Neal’s superb *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic*, Routledge, 2002.
 23. Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism*, State University of New York Press, 1995.
 24. Including occasionally from within the rap industry: see for example ex-*The Source* editorial staff member Bakari Kitwana’s *The Rap on Gangsta Rap*, Third World Press, 1994.
 25. James C. Scott, *Domination: the Arts of Resistance*, Yale University Press, 1990.
 26. Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts*, see note 22.